

PUBLIC NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PRIVATIZATION OF THE WATER TREATMENT AND DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM AND THE WASTEWATER COLLECTION AND TREATMENT SYSTEM, FORT BENNING, GEORGIA

To Whom It May Concern:

The United States Army Infantry Center, Directorate of Public Works, Environmental Management Division, Fort Benning, Georgia, hereby announces the completion and public availability of the Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) concerning the privatization of the water and wastewater collection and treatment systems on Fort Benning, Georgia. These documents were prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

Defense Reform Initiative Directive (DRID) #49 directs all Military Departments to privatize their utility systems (electric, water, wastewater and natural gas), except those needed for unique security reasons or when privatization is uneconomical. Privatization is defined as the transfer of ownership, responsibilities, investments, upgrades, plant replacement, and continued operation and maintenance to the non-Federal sector. Fort Benning has already privatized its electrical and natural gas distribution systems; privatization of the water distribution and wastewater collection systems would therefore complete Fort Benning's requirements per DRID #49.

In 2002, an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) for the privatization of the Fort Benning water and wastewater collection and treatment systems (W/WW systems) were completed. No alternative was selected as "preferred" as a result of the EA and FNSI; however, the document presented a thorough and comprehensive picture of the privatization process and the potential impacts to the natural and human environment. The EA analyzed the "No Action/Status Quo" alternative plus two action alternatives: one involving the new W/WW system owner's long-term utilization of on-Post facilities and one involving the new W/WW systems owner's short-term usage (approximately 18-24 months) of on-Post facilities while connection routes tying the new owner's system into the on-Post systems were constructed. The EA proposed separate connection routes for the W/WW systems, beginning at each system and leading off-Post, based on best available knowledge from the Directorate of Public Works (DPW) personnel. No comments on this EA and FNSI were received from the public and it was determined that neither of the proposed alternatives would result in potentially significant environmental impacts if proper mitigation and monitoring efforts were followed.

Recently, a different route has been proposed for the connection of potential off-Post systems to the W/WW systems on Fort Benning. For the purposes of this document, this proposed action will be referred to as "Revised Alternative III," since it consists of the connection to an off-Post system, but with a differing route of connection than the one analyzed in the 2002 EA and FNSI. Fort Benning is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) to identify and evaluate the environmental effects of the newly proposed connection route between the new owner and the Fort Benning W/WW systems, which consists of approximately 30,000 linear feet of water connection lines and approximately 41,000 linear feet of wastewater connection lines. While this connection is in progress, the new owner will operate and maintain the existing Fort

Benning W/WW systems. After the completion of this line emplacement (and its associated construction activities), the use and maintenance of the existing Fort Benning W/WW systems will cease, the new W/WW lines will be activated, and the collection and treatment of water and wastewater will occur at the new owner's off-Post facilities; at that time, the existing Fort Benning W/WW systems will be demolished.

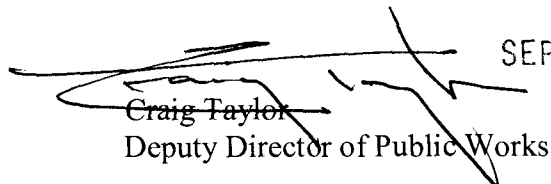
The SEA evaluates the effects associated with the proposed action on soils, vegetation, water quality, wildlife, socioeconomics, land use, environmental justice, cultural resources, utilities, noise, air quality, hazardous materials containment/disposal, public health and safety, and the protection of children.

The SEA and Draft FNSI for the proposed action have been completed and made available to the public for a review period of 30 days starting from the first day of publication in "The Columbus Ledger-Enquirer," in accordance with part 1501.4 (e)(1) of Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations and Army Regulation 200-2. These documents are available at the following locations, in addition to the following website: www.benning.army.mil/EMD/Legal&PublicNotices.htm.

- W.C. Bradley Memorial Library, located at 1120 Bradley Drive, Columbus, Georgia. Open Monday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Sunday from 1:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
- South Lumpkin Library, located at 2034 South Lumpkin Road, Columbus, Georgia. Open Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and on Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- Fort Benning Main Post Library, located in Building 93, Fort Benning, Georgia. Open Monday through Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 8:50 p.m., Saturday from 12:00 p.m. to 7:50 p.m., and Sunday from 12:00 p.m. to 8:50 p.m.

Anyone wishing to comment on the proposed action or request additional information must write to the U.S. Army Infantry Center, Directorate of Public Works, Environmental Programs Management Branch (Attention: Ms. Melissa Kendrick), Building 6 (Meloy Hall) Room 309, Fort Benning, Georgia 31905-5122, or call (706) 545-9878.

Sincerely


Craig Taylor
Deputy Director of Public Works

SEP 15 2004