



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF WATER

DECISION MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Project-Specific Availability Waiver of American Iron and Steel Requirements to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago for 24-Inch Carbon Steel Gate Valves

FROM: Andrew Sawyers, Director
Office of Wastewater Management

Decision: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is hereby granting a project waiver pursuant to the “American Iron and Steel” (AIS) requirements of the Clean Water Act Section 608 under the authority of Section 608(c)(2) to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, Illinois (Applicant) for 24-inch carbon steel gate valves. This waiver permits the use of these gate valves, manufactured outside of the United States, in the Mainstream Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP) Pumps Rehabilitation project, because no domestic manufacturers produce alternatives that meet the technical specifications of the project.

This waiver applies only to the proposed project funded by the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF). Any other jurisdiction with projects funded by either the CWSRF, the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, or the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act that wishes to use the same product must apply for a separate waiver.

Rationale: Section 608 of the Clean Water Act requires CWSRF assistance recipients for treatment works projects to use specific iron and steel products that are produced in the United States. EPA has the authority to determine whether it is necessary to waive this requirement based on certain circumstances set forth in Section 608(c) of the Clean Water Act. The provision states that, “[the requirements] shall not apply in any case or category of cases in which the Administrator [of EPA] finds that – . . . (2) iron and steel products are not produced in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available quantities and of a satisfactory quality.”

Background of Waiver Request: The Applicant provided information to EPA asserting that there are no domestic manufacturers producing 24-inch carbon steel gate valves in sufficient and reasonably available quantities and of a satisfactory quality. The Applicant

is completing a project to rehabilitate the mainstream TARP pumps 1, 3, and 5, including the motors, rotating assemblies, and associated valves and ancillary systems. The existing valves are incompatible with the actuators being installed and cannot physically operate within the existing space; replacement gate valves are integral to the function of the TARP pumps as designed.

Assessment of Waiver Request: EPA conducted market research and a public comment period on the supply and availability of these 24-inch carbon steel gate valves. The basis of evaluation included thorough review of the waiver request submission, examination of domestic manufacturer catalogs or other technical data and marketing materials, personal communication with domestic manufacturers, inquiries of state staff, and outreach to contractors and engineers with expertise and familiarity with the project. During market research, EPA contacted sixteen (16) manufacturers and suppliers of these gate valves. Seven (7) of the manufacturers responded, stating they could not make 24-inch carbon steel gate valves that meet the technical specifications of the project and are AIS compliant. The remaining nine (9) manufacturers and/or suppliers did not respond to EPA's inquiry. EPA received no (zero) public comments to the waiver request.

Finding: Since the Applicant established a reasonable basis to specify the product required for this project, and because EPA substantiated the Applicant's claim through market research that this product is not available from a manufacturer in the United States, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, Illinois is hereby granted a waiver from the AIS requirements. This waiver permits the purchase of 24-inch carbon steel gate valves, as documented in the State of Illinois' waiver request submittal on behalf of the Applicant dated June 15, 2023.

If you have any questions concerning the contents of this memorandum, please contact Timothy Connor, Chemical Engineer, Water Infrastructure Division, at connor.timothy@epa.gov or (202) 566-1059.