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EPA fines Nogales, Ariz. for Safe Drinking Water violations

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City to spend over \$50,000 on environmental project, pay \$5,500 fine

(San Francisco, Calif. -- 07/06/2006) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently resolved the city of Nogales's long-standing drinking water violations regarding its failure to comply with a March 2004 EPA administrative order requiring submittal of drinking water monitoring and reporting data.

The city of Nogales will pay a \$5,500 fine and spend at least \$50,000 to repair or replace sewer lines in an area of Nogales commonly referred to as the "old city," where sewer lines have degraded and are leaking wastewater into the surrounding soil and possibly into groundwater supplies.

The city failed to meet a March EPA 2005 deadline requiring the municipality to monitor and report chemicals detected in its drinking water. The EPA uses the data to evaluate the need for new drinking water standards under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

"The potential for contamination in drinking water is our foremost concern. Through monitoring, we work with public water systems to determine how best to protect drinking water supplies for the public," said Alexis Strauss, Water Division director for EPA's Pacific Southwest region. "This helps us ensure public water systems will continue to provide safe drinking water."

The Nogales system, which provides drinking water to over 19,000 customers, is required to monitor for a number of unregulated contaminants, such as perchlorate and MTBE, in addition to those regulated by the Safe Drinking Water Act and report the results to the EPA.

The requirement to monitor for unregulated contaminants applies to public water systems serving over 10,000 persons, along with a select number of smaller water systems.

For more information on the EPA's unregulated contaminants monitoring rule program go to:
<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/ucmr/index.html>

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