



Wastewater News

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Clean Water ... a better environment
Office of Wastewater Management

Working towards Clean Water

Upcoming Training, Meetings and Conferences



Office of Wastewater Management (OWM) Session(s) at August 1998 National Meeting (Strengthening the Foundation of the Nation's Water Quality Program, Philadelphia, PA, August 24-28, 1998, Sponsored by the Office of Water) -

Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET)

Laura Phillips, EPA Headquarters (OWM) and Phillip Jennings, EPA Region VI (NPDES Permitting Branch) will be providing a brief presentation on the status and developments of the EPA Headquarters/Regional work group activities on the issues outlined in the U.S. EPA February 1997 draft National WET Implementation Strategy including a focus on the topic of reasonable potential with respect to WET permit limits.

The session will begin with framing the genesis of the EPA workgroup with respect to the U.S. EPA 1997 draft National WET Implementation Strategy. The draft strategy was issued as part of EPA's commitment to undertake a *A fine-tuning* and *Amid-course* correction to an existing WET program. The draft WET Implementation Strategy outlined the Agency's thoughts on how to improve the implementation of the WET program.

The session will include a discussion of the development of a final National WET Implementation Strategy and the development of various program enhancements supporting the strategy, including a section on reasonable potential (RP). For further information, please contact: Laura Phillips, U.S. EPA (OWM) at (202) 260-9522 or lphillips.laura@epa.gov or Phillip Jennings, U. S. EPA, Region VI at (214) 665-7538 or pjennings.phillip@epa.gov

Title VI Federal Implementation Advisory Committee Meeting

The National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology, Title VI Implementation Advisory Committee will be holding meetings on July 27-28, 1998 in Philadelphia, and October 19-20, 1998 (location to be determined). Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibits recipients of federal financial assistance from discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin in their programs or activities. The purpose of this committee is to review and evaluate existing tools, techniques and processes for 1) assessing whether disparate impacts based on race, color, or national origin have occurred or have the potential to occur; 2) mitigating disparate impacts where they occur; and 3) operating environmental permitting programs in compliance with Title VI. For more information, contact Angela Lee on (202) 260-6814 and Mahesh Podar on (202) 260-5387.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR ONSITE TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Headquarters staff are finalizing work with staff of EPA Region IX and Pima County Community College in preparation for the Onsite Training and Technical Assistance National Meeting being held on June 8 - 11, 1998, in Tucson, Arizona. Under Section 104(g) of the Clean Water Act, this program, through a network of operator training staff in the States, provides onsite operator training and technical assistance to small wastewater treatment plant operators (under 5 MGD) with compliance problems. For more information, contact Gary Hudiburgh on (202) 260-4926.

CLEAN WATER NEEDS SURVEY (CWNS) DATABASE MODERNIZATION

An Alpha Test of the production system for the CWNS database will occur at the Systems Development Center (SDC) in Arlington, VA on June 15 --18. Although the Alpha Test is still a work in progress, it will provide EPA with an opportunity to see how the system will function to support the year 2000 CWNS. It will also afford participants an opportunity for a hands on experience with the production database system. Following the alpha testing, additional training on the production system will be conducted at Region II offices on September 15 -17, 1998. Installation will occur in late fall. For more information, contact Jim Shuster on (202) 260-5829.

Pretreatment Training Course

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The National Pretreatment Program Team, in coordination with Water Environment Federation will be offering "The Pretreatment Training Course" in Chicago, IL on June 23 & 24, and in Raleigh, NC on July 20 & 21. The objective of this training course is to provide the basic regulatory framework and technical considerations that support the development and implementation of pretreatment programs under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program and the Clean Water Act (CWA). The course is designed and recommended for environmental professionals responsible for implementing the Pretreatment Program at the local level, industrial dischargers, consultants, and especially individuals that are new to the program. To register for the course, please contact Water Environment Federation at 1-800-666-0206. For more information on course content, please contact Pat Bradley on (202) 260-6963.

Regulations at Work

STEAM ELECTRIC RELATED WORK Cooling Water Intake Structures (316(b) rulemaking)

On 8 May, the notice appeared in the *Federal Register*, announcing that the information collection request (ICR) for the screener questionnaire was at OMB for review and comment.

On 14 May, Tudor Davies signed the *Federal Register* notice, announcing a public meeting on Monday, June 29, 1998 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Crystal City Marriott, 1999 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, VA 22202. The purpose of this meeting is to facilitate the exchange of information on specific EPA issues related to defining and measuring

adverse environmental impacts from cooling water intake structures.

On 15 May, several members of the EPA 316(b) workgroup met with EPRI members to finalize the call for papers letter and the agenda for the joint EPA/EPRI technical workshop planned for 22-24 September, 1998 in West Virginia. The workshop will focus on technical issues relating to the definition and assessment of adverse environmental impact, and will include the presentation and discussion of perspectives on related technical issues. For more information contact Deborah Nagle on (202) 260-2656.

Clean Water SRF Regional Reviews

The SRF Branch is nearing completion of comprehensive reviews of all 10 regional Clean Water SRF programs. Our last round of reviews was conducted in FY96. This year's reviews have consisted of preliminary Adesktop@ reviews of SRF documents from selected states in each region as well as on-site discussions that involved a comprehensive set of questions and minimum program requirements. The reviews have covered everything from core program requirements to fund management techniques to environmental progress. A few basic elements of the newly established Drinking Water SRF program are also covered in the review. We expect to have the on-site portion of these reviews completed by June 1, with written reports completed by July 1. For more information, contact Kristin Kenausis on (202)260-2036.

Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) NPDES Permits

The Washington, DC, MS4 storm

water permitting effort continues. EPA Headquarters is supporting the District's development of a storm water management plan (SWMP). The SWMP is one of the most crucial requirements of a city's application for NPDES permit coverage and without it EPA Region 3 has been unable to draft a viable permit. EPA support to DC hinges on whether the Region can obtain a memorandum of agreement with the District committing them to provide the required SWMP. Financial help is also being supplied to State permit writers for MS4s in Regions 4 and 7. For more information, contact Bryan Rittenhouse on (202) 260-0592.

Modification of the NPDES Multi-Sector General Permit (MSGP) for Industrial Storm Water Discharges

The language for the modification to cover industries not included in the original 1995 MSGP has been completed. Two important components of the modification are the inclusion of historic properties provisions and endangered species provisions. A list of endangered and threatened species for all counties where the permit is in effect will also be included and will be periodically updated by the EPA and provided at the OWM web site. Regional Administrator (RA) signatures should be obtained by early June, followed by publication in the Federal Register. For more information, contact Bryan Rittenhouse on (202) 260-0592.

Mining Sector Modification to the MSGP

A modification to the MSGP covering waste rock and overburden piles in the hard rock mining sector has been largely completed with the agreement between EPA and the National Mining Association on the monitoring regime

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permittees must undertake. The remaining obstacle prior to publication of the final permit modification is the receipt of CWA 401 certification letters (i.e., State water quality standards will be protected by the regulatory action) from the affected States in Regions 1, 6, 9 and 10. This action should be completed by about mid July. For more information contact Bryan Rittenhouse on (202) 260-0592.

Vice Presidential Exurban Sprawl Initiative

In response to an Agency-wide call, Offices are to evaluate their programs to determine if any of them contribute, to the growing problem of sprawl-type development in fringe areas rather than in sustainable, smart-growth fashion in already-developed suburbs and urban areas. The Municipal Support Division's (MSD's) State Revolving Fund has been suspected of contributing to the nation's rapidly shrinking total of agricultural land and open space. The MSD responded with a paper detailing various fallacies and misconceptions about the SRF, and has initiated a study to provide case evidence that sprawl-type development is generally not a result of new wastewater treatment plants being built with SRF funds. OWM also provided a plan for enhancing urban redevelopment through a holistic, unified urban watershed permitting and restoration approach. For more information, contact Bryan Rittenhouse on (202) 260-0592.

Project XL: Performance-Based Pretreatment Pilot Programs (Federal Register Notice -Request for Proposals)

EPA will soon publish a Federal Register notice requesting proposals from POTWs interested in implementing alternative local

pretreatment programs. EPA is not proposing a change to the regulations at this time. Instead, in response to the findings of stakeholder studies regarding measures of performance, EPA is requesting POTWs interested in implementing environmental performance-based programs to submit Project XL proposals explaining how they would change their pretreatment program implementation. To qualify for this Project XL program a POTW must: currently administer an approved pretreatment program; have a solid record of compliance; and have five years of influent, effluent, and sludge quality data, as well as three years of ambient water quality measurements for its receiving water or be able to demonstrate the ability to collect ambient data. The project proposed by the POTW must then meet the Project XL criteria as explained in the Federal Register notice. For more information, contact Pat Bradley on (202) 260-6963.

Streamlining the General Pretreatment Program Requirements

EPA Headquarters has drafted a proposal to streamline a number of requirements under the General Pretreatment Regulations found in 40 CFR part 403. Several Aproposal@ draft documents were provided to outside stakeholders (State regulators, governmental associations, professional and trade associations, and environmental interest groups) for review and comment prior to drafting the proposed rule. EPA has also discussed the issues with stakeholders at numerous public meetings, including several sponsored by the Association of Metropolitan Sewerage Agencies (AMSA) and the Water Environment Federation (WEF). The proposed regulatory changes address thirteen issues that include allowing POTWs to accept certain acidic wastes

if these wastes will not damage their collection systems, exclusions or variable requirements for smaller facilities that contribute insignificant amounts of pollutants, clarification of requirements for implementing certain pretreatment standards, and more flexible reporting, inspection and sampling requirements. The proposed rule has been sent to OMB for formal review and concurrence. EPA anticipates publishing the proposal in the Federal Register in late summer 1998. For more information, contact Jeff Smith at (202) 260-5586.

Proposed Rule to Revise NPDES Permit Application Requirements for POTWs and TWTDS

On December 6, 1995, the proposed NPDES Permit Application Requirements for POTWs and TWTDS were published in the Federal Register. (60 F.R. 62546 (Dec. 6, 1995)). This rulemaking addresses changes to the NPDES program since 1973, the first and last time EPA published wastewater application forms for POTWs. The NPDES program applicable to such discharges has changed significantly since that time, specifically in the areas of toxics control, sludge management, water quality-based permitting, and pretreatment programs. Additionally, this proposal should help reduce redundant reporting by allowing permitting authorities to waive requirements where information is otherwise available to them. The final rulemaking has been sent to OMB for review. For more information contact Robin Danesi on (202) 260-2991.

Proposed Rule on Electronic Reporting in the NPDES Program

EPA is proposing changes to its NPDES regulations to allow reports and other information to be submitted electronically. When EPA

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promulgated the current NPDES regulations, the Agency did not anticipate the need or technologies for electronic reporting. Consequently, the current regulations do not specifically address use of electronic reporting technologies. The proposed rule would establish criteria for electronic reporting and a specific process and conditions for electronic reporting of discharge monitoring reports (DMR) to EPA that are intended to achieve reliable and secure electronic reporting in the NPDES program. The proposal addresses electronic signature, certification, and record keeping requirements that permittees would follow when submitting forms to EPA electronically. We expect to publish a proposed rule this fall. For more information contact Robin Danesi on (202) 260-2991.

Other News

Progress on Border Cities Wastewater System Improvements

The Environmental Protection Agency's U.S.-Mexico Border infrastructure program has made significant progress on border cities wastewater system improvements. Along the portion of the binational border marked by the Rio Grande, sanitary sewer evaluation field work has been completed in Piedras Negras and Ciudad Acuña. Similar work is getting underway in Nuevo Laredo and Matamoros, reducing the possibility of untreated sewage escaping to the shared river. Along the New River, the Mexicali project has progressed to planning and design of the Mexicali II wastewater treatment plant. Nogales, on the Santa Cruz River, is doing final inspections on early construction projects for immediate needs. EPA is sharing technical expertise and project expenses on these activities for improvement of the border water

environment. For more information, contact Eliot Tucker on (202) 260-5842.

Texas Colonias

We continue to provide technical assistance, in conjunction with Region 6, to respond to inquiries from Sen. Hutchinson of Texas, as well as the State of Texas, with regard to the 50 percent match requirement contained in the FY 1997 Appropriations Act for use of \$50 million in colonias money for wastewater treatment facilities for Texas colonias. It is uncertain if the State will be able to provide the required match, and there may be action to provide for a legislative solution to the matter. For more information, contact Steve Hogye on (202) 260-5841.

Water Conservation Plan Guidelines

The Office of Wastewater Management met with the Water Conservation Plan Guidelines Subcommittee of the Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) on May 4, 1998 to facilitate the development of recommendations on EPA's draft Water Conservation Plan Guidelines for public water systems. The Subcommittee's recommendations will be presented to the LGAC at its meeting in Chicago on June 11, 1998. A teleconference with the Subcommittee will be held on June 4, 1998 to review public comments on the draft Guidelines, the comment period for which ended on May 21, 1998. EPA is required to publish guidelines by August 6, 1998 and States have the option of requiring a water conservation plan as a condition of receiving a loan under a State Drinking Water Revolving Loan Program, in accordance with Sec.1455 of the Safe Drinking Water Act. The draft Guidelines and additional information on the development

process can be accessed at <http://www.epa.gov/owm/genwave.htm>. Further information is also available from John Flowers at 202-260-7288.

Wastewater Excellence Awards Program

Nominations from the Regional Offices for municipal wastewater treatment plants for the operations and maintenance awards that will be presented at the WEFTEC Meeting in Orlando, Florida on October 5, 1998, were received by May 22, 1998. MSD staff are transmitting the award nominations to a national selection panel for review and rating. For more information contact Maria Campbell on (202) 260-5815.

U.S.-Mexico Foundation for Science (FUMEC)

We continue to respond to inquiries and provide technical assistance to requests from Rep Brown regarding his desire to use funds currently contained in the FY 1998 Appropriations Act in the amount of \$1 million for support of the U.S.-Mexico Foundation for Science (FUMEC) as an endowment; we do not have this authority under current law. We are working with other EPA offices in developing a response to Rep. Brown's May 19 letter to the Administrator on this matter. For more information, contact Eliot Tucker on (202) 260-5842.

TRIBAL NEWS

Additional Support for Rural and Native Village Sanitation Program

The delivery of safe drinking water systems and sewage facilities to citizens or rural and Alaska Native Villages by Federal and state agencies is quite challenging. Congress is interested in bring more resources to bear on the problem and asked the

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Corps of Engineers to work with EPA to conduct an assessment of what role they could play in the delivery of sanitation systems in Alaska. On May 5, 1998, OWM commented on their final *Report to Congress on the Advisability and Capability of the U.S. Corps of Engineers to Implement Sanitation Projects for Rural and Native Villages in Alaska*. OWM, in conjunction with Region X, concurred with the findings of the report but stressed that further assessments are needed to help work out details related to interagency coordination, prioritization and implementation of projects in rural and Native communities. For more information, contact Sylvia Bell at (202) 260-7255.

Training and Technical Assistance Services

The Municipal Support Division sponsored a workshop session at the Fourth National Tribal Conference on Environmental Management on May 19-21, 1998 in Red Wing, MN on information, training and technical assistance services that are available to tribes on wastewater systems. Rick Phalunas of West Virginia University provided an overview of the services offered by the National Small Flows Clearinghouse, National Drinking Water Clearinghouse and National Environmental Training Center for Small communities. Chuck Pycha of the Region 5's State and Tribal Programs Branch spoke on ways in which tribes can partner with the West Virginia University to obtain needed training and assistance for their environmental personnel. Over 600 persons attended this year's conference, including Indian tribes, EPA staff, other federal and state agencies, and representatives from the private sector concerned with environmental matters. For more information, contact Sylvia Bell on (202) 260-7255.

Partnership with Rural Utilities Service (RUS), USDA

The Municipal Support Division and the Office of Groundwater and Drinking Water are continuing their work with the RUS, USDA on collaboration to provide Tribal communities with safer and cleaner water. John Romano, Deputy Administrator, RUS has sent a memorandum to his State Directors and Program Managers in Indian County alerting them to our activities in the field. We are finalizing a similar memorandum to our Regional Offices, alerting them of RUS's capabilities. In addition, Sylvia Bell met with senior RUS officials at the Fourth National Conference on Environmental Management to continue our coordination efforts. For more information, contact Sylvia Bell on (202) 260-7255.

