

COASTAL WATER QUALITY ISSUES

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Raw Sewage: Dilution is Not Solution



The US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) is expected to release its "National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit Requirements for Municipal Wastewater Treatment Discharges During Wet Weather Conditions," a policy that would let wastewater treatment plants re-route sewage around secondary treatment units during wet weather. The untreated, but filtered, sewage would then be "blended" with fully treated wastewater before being discharged directly into a waterbody.

The USEPA Administrator is expected to imminently approve this final guidance policy. Citizens, organizations, and elected officials are encouraged to immediately write letters to the Administrator urging the withdrawal of the guidance and to hold fast to and enforce existing rules that address the root causes of wastewater treatment problems. Write to: USEPA Administrator, Ariel Rios Building, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20460.

NJ Bills to Stop Fast Track Introduced

Bi-partisan bills in both the NJ Senate and Assembly were introduced in mid-December to repeal the Fast Track law. S2157 and A3650 are needed to stop Fast Track, which weakens public health and environmental standards, eliminates public participation, and permits polluters to write their own permits. Attending a December 13 press conference in Trenton to announce and support the bills were Senate Minority Leader Leonard Lance (R-23) and Senators Shirley Turner (D-15), Robert Martin (R-26), and Ellen Karcher (D-12), and Assemblymen Reed Gusciora (D-15), John Rooney (R-39), Louis Manzo (D-31), Sean Kean (R-11), Robert Morgan (D-12), Bill Baroni (R-12), and Linda Greenstein (D-12). COA commends the coastal delegation who remain strong in opposition of Fast Track.



Earlier in the month, Governor James McGreevey issued an executive order putting a temporary moratorium on Fast Track's implementation to provide an opportunity for the law to be properly debated. Since then, Acting Governor Richard Codey publicly committed to "making major changes" on Fast Track.

For updates or more information, visit www.savenj.net.

Oyster Creek Nuclear Power Plant Re-licensing Review



The NJ Assembly Environmental and Solid Waste Committee convened two public meetings, one on December 2 in Brick Township and the second on December 9 in Tinton Falls, to accept testimony on the proposed re-licensing of the Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Plant in Lacey Township.

Oyster Creek is the oldest nuclear power plant in the nation, coming on-line in 1969, and will operate under its original 40-year license until 2009. The decision to re-license the plant rests with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The reasons against re-licensing Oyster Creek beyond 2009 are numerous, including inappropriate location, aging and degrading infrastructure, problematic storage capabilities, and environmental concerns.

However, COA is focused on the imminent proposal to renew the plant's NJ Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for its once-through cooling system. At the Brick meeting, COA presented testimony expressing concerns with the significant ecological impacts of this system on the marine environment. These impacts include impingement (organisms are too large to pass through the screens and are trapped), entrainment (organisms are small enough to pass through the screens and enter the cooling system where they are subjected to numerous and potentially fatal insults), thermal discharge, and chlorination.

(continued on next column)

CONTAMINATED SEDIMENTS

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Atlantic Highlands Marina to Dredge

COA submitted comments to NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) on the dredging of Atlantic Highlands Municipal Harbor. The borough proposes dredging ~42,000 cubic yards (CY) from the east end of the harbor, plus an additional undisclosed volume from the west end, with all dredged material placed in a Confined Disposal Facility (CDF) just east of the harbor. Dredging has begun on the west end and the remaining work is awaiting final permit approval. The borough is running against a January 1 deadline that prohibits dredging through May 31 to protect eggs and larvae of winter flounder.

COA is not against maintenance dredging, as it is necessary for safe navigation, but there are several concerns with this project. Sediment sampling data indicated Acute, Chronic and Human Health Surface Water Quality Criteria were exceeded for several contaminants, including mercury, lead and copper. NJDEP should therefore require all effluent be tested prior to discharge from the CDF to ensure water quality is not degraded. We also expressed concern with the capacity of the CDF. The project volume is 42,000+ CY and the capacity of the CDF is only ~45,000 CY. Also, the northern retaining wall is only 18 feet from the Mean High Water Line in some locations, raising concerns over its stability during a major storm event. Visit COA's website under "Issues & Campaigns" to view comments.

Port Jersey Dredging Project Continues

COA submitted comments to the US Army's Corp of Engineers (USACE) regarding the dredging of Contract Area 2A of the Port Jersey Channel to deepen and widen the existing non-federal 38' channel to a depth of 41' below mean low water. This is part of a larger project that will eventually deepen the channel to 50' and generate a total of over 3.5 million cubic yards (CY) of dredged material. Contract Area 2A includes a proposal to place 95,000 CY of material at the Historic Area Remediation Site (HARS). Visit COA's website for our comments.

(Oyster Creek, continued from left column)

Specifically:

- A study conducted from November 1984 through December 1985 reported 22 million fish and invertebrates were impinged.
- Water is drawn into the plant via the Forked River and released via Oyster Creek, which drains into Barnegat Bay. The flow of the southern portion of Forked River was reversed to accommodate the water needs of the plant.
- Elevated temperatures in Oyster Creek and surrounding waters due to discharge allow tropical/subtropical invasive species to survive. Consequently, two exotic shipworms are creating problems for boat owners.

COA will fight the renewal of Oyster Creek's once-through cooling system.

What's Cool at I.C.E.?



This month we are featuring ICE as a winter wonderland of activities. Exploration of the various indoor activities is an option for the coastal-minded during cold winter months. Visit the aquarium exhibits to see and learn about NJ's marine life or explore the science stations where you can use microscopes to examine marine specimens, fossils, insects, plant material, and sand from different beaches around the world. The Beach Sweeps display gives a unique perspective on the wastefulness of litter. Ocean advocates of all ages can also test their knowledge of fish and ocean geography with activity boards.

ICE in Wildwood is a very "cool" place to spend some time, all year 'round. As a New Year's resolution, visit ICE (anytime after January 10). Call ICE for winter hours.

Take a Polar Plunge for the Ocean



The 2nd Annual Sons of Ireland Polar Bear Plunge will take place on New Year's Day, January 1, 2005, and will benefit COA, as well as Teddy's Fund. Headquarters for this year's plunge will be Donovan's Reef in Sea Bright, NJ, and the plunge will occur at 1pm from the beach directly behind Donovan's. Participants should arrive at least 30-minutes early for check-in. Participants, on-lookers, friends, and family are welcome.

Participants are asked to collect pledges to take the plunge. Last year, the event raised over \$10,000 for the 9/11 Fund for the Education of Monmouth County Children. This year, there will be prizes for the top fundraisers, as well as for the best plunge attire or lack thereof.

For information and a pledge form, visit www.sonsofirelandpolarplunge.com or email questions to polarbearplunge@comcast.net. The Sons of Ireland is a non-profit association dedicated to the principles of brotherhood, charity, and community service. The group was founded in 2002 with the specific intent of supporting worthy causes and charities in Monmouth County, NJ.

ARTIFICIAL REEFS

Draft NJ Artificial Reef Plan

COA submitted comments on the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Draft Artificial Reef Plan (due December 6). To review our comments, visit www.cleanoceanaction.org and follow links for "Issues and Campaigns."

Delaware River (continued from page one)

The Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN) is heading the effort to hold the appropriate parties responsible and to ensure that natural resource damages (NRD) are assessed. Bradley Campbell, Commissioner of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), said NJ will pursue NRD action.

At press time, the cause of the spill was still being determined. Federal investigators believe a possible cause was a pipe three feet in diameter and 15 feet long, located 700 feet from the Citgo pier, the destination for the tanker.

Citizens Can Help

- DRN seeks volunteer monitors and citizens to help document the extent of the oil spill. Call Faith Zerbe, DRN Monitoring Coordinator at 215-369-1188.
- Take a walk on your local beach, especially in South Jersey. If you see tar balls or other evidence of oil, call 267-765-3439. If you find an injured bird or animal, call the John Heinz Wildlife Refuge at 215-365-1558.
- For updates on the spill and important telephone numbers, visit www.incidentinfo.com or www.delawareriverkeeper.org.

Delaware Oil Spill by the Numbers

- 126 miles of River and shoreline impacted
 - Up to 473,500 gallons of oil dumped in the River
 - Over 18,800 gallons of oil-water mixture collected
 - 22 miles of boom laid out
 - Over 129 birds confirmed dead
 - 198 oiled birds captured; of which, 126 have been cleaned
 - Over 1,700 people involved in cleanup
- (as of 12/13/04)