

**EASTERN SNYDER COUNTY REGIONAL AUTHORITY
P.O. Box 330
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PRESS RELEASE – November 20, 2008

The Eastern Snyder County Regional Authority (ESCRA) Board of Directors recently approved joining a consortium of other municipalities and authorities which also operate Wastewater Treatment plants in central Pennsylvania. The consortium functions under the auspices of the Capital Region Council of Governments (CAPCOG) with the expressed purpose of following and, if necessary, opposing the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) intention to implement and enforce "Total Maximum Daily Loads" (TMDL's) of Nitrogen and Phosphorus further beyond the cap loads currently being challenged by CAPCOG. The purpose of this action is to protect ratepayers (the public) from costly wastewater treatment plant upgrades.

In ESCRA's case, as in many others, these upgrades would come directly on the heels of recent upgrades. ESCRA is currently refining its operational procedures to accommodate a seven million dollar improvement largely completed last year. In today's economic climate, another multi-million dollar rebuild of an already well-functioning wastewater treatment facility is far beyond what ESCRA's customers could be expected to bear.

For background on the TMDL process; a TMDL is the maximum amount of a pollutant that a stream or body of water can safely absorb and still maintain its designated use, such as for recreation or swimming. Once the regulatory agency (EPA) determines how much of a pollutant a stream can assimilate, it calculates an endpoint of that pollutant for the stream. That endpoint is the maximum amount of the pollutant that is allowed in the stream. Development of a TMDL can be a very complex and costly process requiring many millions of dollars to implement.

With respect to the Chesapeake Bay TMDL, EPA is expected to develop endpoints for phosphorus, nitrogen and sediment for streams and rivers in Pennsylvania that flow into the Bay. It is not known now what those Endpoints will be. However, both Wastewater Treatment Plants and Municipalities, through their discharge permits for treated water and storm water, will certainly be affected.

CAPCOG recently successfully argued against Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Resource's (DEP's) Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy in which DEP established allowable loadings of nitrogen and phosphorus outside the normal regulatory process and without benefit of public comment.

Now, with EPA expected to be establishing more stringent regulations than DEP, those authorities and municipalities which have already expended public funds to meet DEP requirements will be subjected to more massive expenditure to satisfy EPA regulations. Of course, the source of that funding is very much in question given the heavy demands for local, state and federal infrastructure improvements nationwide.

Right now, ESCRA is in the process of determining what the costs of the various state and federal regulations will be and what sources of funding will have the least impact on the consumers of wastewater treatment services. All of that, of course, in addition to the expenditures necessary to operate and maintain its aging system.

ESCRA feels it is important that all municipalities, authorities and citizens keep themselves aware of matters relating to government regulation and to express their thoughts to elected officials. Without input from the people most affected by government action, government will continue to impose unfunded regulation that will further cripple the economy of every citizen.

The Eastern Snyder County Regional Authority operates its wastewater treatment plant at the south end of Selinsgrove on the Isle of Que and serves the communities of Shamokin Dam, Hummels Wharf, Selinsgrove and much of Penn Township. The plant was originally operated, beginning with its construction in 1980, as the Selinsgrove Municipal Authority, but with final payment of the original bond issue in 1994, the assets were transferred to the new Authority in accordance with the founding agreements signed by the contributing communities.

ESCRA's Wastewater Treatment Plant daily operations are under the management of a Manager, Assistant Manager and Secretary along with eight employees: most of who are long term employees. The Authority is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of two appointees from each of the four municipalities. *(The Board recently lost a highly respected member in the person of Elton Kauffman from Hummels Wharf).* Members are appointed to the Board by their respective communities for five year periods. Like ESCRA's employees, most Directors have also served for many years.

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