



Information for NYWEA Members June 2015

Sewage Pollution Right to Know Law Implementation

In 2013 when the Sewage Pollution Right to Know law was passed, operators were given the additional role of informing the public of times and locations in which inadequately treated sewage is discharged into our waters. The state's NY-ALERT system was identified as the best way to report the discharges and in turn notify the public within four hours, as required by law.

DEC worked with the NYS Division of Homeland Security, Office of Information Technology Services (ITS), and their contractor to customize the NY-ALERT system to accept sewage discharge reports from POTWs and POSSs and disseminate them to the appropriate entities and general public. DEC sent registrations and notifier agreements to POTWs and POSSs to provide access to report sewage discharges through NY-ALERT. To date, 85 % of POTWs and 55 % of POSSs have submitted registrations, and there are now over 2,000 notifiers approved to report sewage discharges through NY-ALERT.

DEC developed NY-Alert guidance materials and You-Tube videos to assist notifiers with reporting and for the general public's use to register for sewage alerts. There are now over 3,000 civilian accounts that receive sewage alerts through NY-ALERT.

Municipal Sewage System Asset Management Pilot

In November 2013, the DEC established a stakeholder workgroup to begin formulating a long-term solution for keeping the state's municipal wastewater treatment and sewage collection systems in a state of good repair. The workgroup is comprised of EFC, members of the wastewater treatment community (NYWEA, NEIWPC, Rural Water Association), consulting engineers, municipalities (NYSARC, New York Conference of Mayors, Association of Towns), and environmental groups (Environmental Advocates, Save the Sound, Riverkeeper). The workgroup helped conceptualize the idea of a pilot project to build advocacy and to further develop a statewide program for long-term sustainable asset management of municipal wastewater infrastructure.

Funding sources have been identified for the pilot. Under the pilot, the DEC plans to work with 10 – 20 municipalities over a period of 3 years. Soon DEC will be asking for volunteer

communities to participate in the pilot. The DEC will select and hire an environmental engineering firm to work with each selected municipality to develop and implement the asset management plan.

DEC has developed the pilot program guide and the pilot application for the municipalities and is working through the DEC's internal process before announcing the pilot to the public. The pilot will be announced in the NYS *Contract Reporter*. Details of the pilot program, the program guide and the application will be posted on the DEC's website.