

Dear Clients, Colleagues, and Friends,

The February 2005 issue of our newsletter, "etcetera", discusses DEP's strategy for controlling nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) that enter the Chesapeake Bay. The purpose of this letter is to mention some of the outcomes from the subsequent February 18, 2005 nutrient workshop sponsored by the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association. It was by way of that venue that DEP more publicly unveiled its strategy and explained how it will affect wastewater treatment facilities and non-point sources such as agriculture run-off discharging to the Susquehanna River watershed.

This program is huge and DEP has a major undertaking on its hands. Once implemented as described, it will change forever how N and P are viewed in wastewater effluents. As expected at this point in its implementation, there are many questions:

- Many left the workshop without a clear understanding of how the strategy will be implemented.
- Just what lies beyond the much-discussed compliance date of 2010 is unknown. The possibility that additional mandates might be required could not be ruled out.
- Concerns were raised about the science used to determine the strategy and the billions of public dollars required for compliance based on that science.
- The POTW flows to be used in determining the N and P limitations that will appear in NPDES permits were not clearly explained.
- The subject of "trading" resulted in numerous, practical questions.
- Not a word was mentioned about the future application of biosolids to farmland, although it was clearly stated that N and P in farmland runoff is excessive and will have to be severely, and permanently cut in order to protect the Bay.

In a nutshell, it looks like the execution of DEP's strategy is developing and there may be a free-for-all of sorts until the procedures are completely defined. But, there are some steps owners of POTWs can take right away:

- Schedule a meeting with your regional DEP "point source team" (your regular DEP planner and permit writer) and request their determination of the 2010 flows they have apparently calculated for your facility and will be used to determine the N and P mass loading allocation (lbs.) for your discharge, which we understand will remain permanently in place regardless of future flow.
- Develop a baseline of N and P data by collecting composite samples and test them for soluble and insoluble total nitrogen, ammonia and total phosphorus in your influent, primary effluent (if applicable) and final effluent, at least monthly and more appropriately on a weekly basis.

DEP's program has momentum. We'll do our best to provide new information as we learn more. Because this program is developing, however, your best bet to develop an effective plan to meet this new challenge is to work together with your engineer and DEP.

Until next time,



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