



BERGEN COUNTY UTILITIES AUTHORITY

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ROBERT E. LAUX
Executive Director

March 7, 2012

The Honorable Mayor Raguseo and Council
Borough of Little Ferry
215-217 Liberty Street
Little Ferry, NJ 07643

Re: BCUA Rain-Derived Infiltration/Inflow (RDI/I) Reduction and Sanitary Sewer
Overflow (SSO) Elimination Plan – 2012 Status

Dear Mayor Raguseo and Council:

During the record setting wet weather events throughout 2011, the Authority's water pollution control facilities, pump stations, and trunk sewers exceeded their capacities and resulted in a number of sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) into the environment. The problem was attributed to excessive rain-derived infiltration and inflow (RDI/I) generated from the municipalities' sanitary sewer systems. RDI/I is clean storm water entering the municipal sanitary and storm water sewer system through cracked pipes, leaky manholes, illegally connected storm drains, roof downspouts, basement sump pumps, and building foundation drains.

Excessive RDI/I substantially affects the costs of treatment at the Authority's water pollution control facilities, ultimately affecting the sewer rate that your residents pay through taxes to operate and maintain your sewerage system. In addition, it reduces the capacity of the facilities and may result in costly infrastructure expansions and a self-imposed sewer ban in accordance with NJDEP regulations. A sewer ban would limit new or expanded sewer connections if the Authority's capacity to properly treat sewage were compromised by permitting additional connections.

Pursuant to the existing service agreement between your Borough and the Authority, among other stipulations, your Borough agreed to construct and maintain necessary internal sanitary sewage collection systems and any additional sewage collection systems as required, and the Authority agreed to treat all sanitary sewage flowing from the municipal sanitary sewage collection systems. As part of the agreement and subsequent amendment, the municipality was to adopt a sewer ordinance prohibiting the discharge of storm water, groundwater, rainwater, street drainage, sub-surface drainage, floor or yard drainage, or unpolluted water to any separate sanitary sewer in the municipal sewer system into the Authority treatment works. The Authority's *Rules and Regulations for the Direct and Indirect Discharge into the Bergen County Utilities Authority Treatment Works* includes an Enforcement Response Plan, which provides



penalties for the failure to comply with a notice of violation to disconnect illegally connected storm drains, roof downspouts, basement sump pumps, and building foundation drains. A copy of the Authority's Rules and Regulations are available on the web at www.bcu.org/publications.

To correct the problem of excessive RDI/I and to eliminate SSOs, you are hereby notified to implement a municipal program to inspect private businesses and houses for sump pumps, roof drains, foundation drains, etc. that are found to be connected to the municipal sanitary sewer system and have them redirected as soon as possible. To assist the municipality and its residents, the Authority will offer an "amnesty" program to those municipalities and residents who have illegally connected storm drains, downspouts, sump pumps, and foundation drains. In addition, the Authority also requests that the municipality verify that all storm drains from athletic fields are not directed into the municipality's sanitary sewer system.

The amnesty program will last until December 31, 2012. During this period, the municipality will inform property owners to inspect their own plumbing to identify illegal hookups and to remove any illegal connections. Owners who do not have the expertise to determine if their sump pumps, storm drains, downspouts, or foundation drains are illegally connected should call the Authority's Environmental Programs Hotline at 201-807-5825. A "Homeowner's Guide" is also available and can be also accessed on the web at www.bcu.org/publications. A number of these brochures will be made available for distribution at municipal buildings, libraries, or other public places. A rain barrel program is also available as an incentive to disconnect roof downspouts as part of the Authority's plan.

In addition to the amnesty program, the municipality should also adopt or amend an ordinance providing that as a condition of the sale of a property in the municipality, a certification from the municipal building department or department of public works is required, stating that the property does not have any illegal sump pumps or other illegal connections to the sanitary sewer system.

For the sake of the water environment, keeping the cost of water pollution control services affordable and preventing a self-imposed sewer ban, it is imperative that the municipality, through its residents, take advantage of this amnesty program period and act immediately.

The Authority is doing its part by adequately finding repairs to its pipelines, pump stations, and water pollution control facilities. The Authority is asking you to do your part by enacting and/or enforcing the sewer ordinance and the BCUA's Rules and Regulations, and by encouraging participation in the amnesty program.



Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Very truly yours,

BERGEN COUNTY UTILITIES AUTHORITY

Robert E. Laux
Executive Director

Eric Andersen
Chief Engineer/Director of
Water Pollution Control Division

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