



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Department of Environmental Quality

Eastern Region The Dalles Office

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TTY 711

August 16th, 2024

Mr. Ian Melzer
City of Wasco
P.O. Box 26
Wasco, OR 97065-0026

RE: Warning Letter with Opportunity to Correct
City of Wasco
2024-WLOTC-9487
File #93863, WPCF Permit #102046
Sherman County

Dear Mr. Melzer:

The City of Wasco operates a domestic wastewater collection and treatment system under Water Pollution Control Facilities (WPCF) Permit #102046. DEQ reviewed written correspondence received on July 26th, 2024 from the City regarding report of noncompliance involving two (2) sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs). The city reported the SSOs to the Oregon Emergency Response System (OERS) on July 8th, 2024 (OERS 2024-1657 & 1658). The SSOs of approximately 450 and 200 gallons each occurred on May 10th and May 26th, 2024 and were discharged to the ground at 1108 Clark Street in the City of Wasco. The reported cause of the overflow was due to a collapsed sewer pipe.

Violations:

Schedule F, Section B.3 of the permit requires specific noncompliance and notification procedures if a permittee is unable to comply with conditions of the permit because of surfacing sewage. Failure to comply with any permit condition is a violation of Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 468B.025(2).

Based on review of the required reports, DEQ has documented the following four (4) violations of Oregon environmental law.

1) Failing to immediately report an overflow and to submit a written report to DEQ within 5-days of becoming aware of the incident.

The overflows occurred in May but were not reported to DEQ and OERS until July. In accordance with DEQ's Enforcement Rules, failing to timely submit a report required by the permit is a Class II violation (OAR 340-012-0055(2)(b)). The city is responsible for two violations of failing to submit a required report within the time required by the permit.

2) Placing wastes in a location where wastes are likely to be carried to waters of the state by any means.

In accordance with DEQ's Enforcement Rules, causing any wastes to be placed in a location where such wastes are likely to be carried to waters of the state by any means is a Class II violation (OAR 340-012-0055(2)(c)). The city is responsible for two violations of placing wastes in a location where wastes are likely to be carried to waters of the state.

Class I violations are considered to be the most serious violations; Class III violations are the least serious.

Environmental Consequences

Fulfilling all mandatory reporting requirements is an important obligation. The permittee must report any noncompliance that may endanger public health or the environment. The discharge of untreated wastewater via sanitary sewer overflow can pose a public health hazard. Contact with contaminated water can lead to ear or skin infections, and inhalation of contaminated water can cause respiratory diseases.

The City must ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the issued WPCF permit and take steps where possible to avoid overflows of untreated wastewater and to ensure appropriate preventative measures are implemented.

Corrective Action Required

- 1) The City must submit a plan and proposed schedule to address the repeated overflows from this area in the collection system. The plan must be submitted to DEQ by email to Justin Sterger (justin.sterger@deq.oregon.gov) by October 1, 2024.

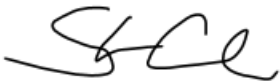
Summary

This notice is a warning letter. DEQ does not intend to take formal enforcement action at this time if the required corrective actions are completed and further overflows do not recur until repairs are completed. Should the City repeat any of these violations, the matter may be referred to DEQ's Office of Compliance and Enforcement for formal enforcement action, including assessment of civil penalties and/or a DEQ order. Civil penalties can be assessed for each day of violation.

If you believe any of the facts in this Warning Letter are in error, you may provide written information to me by email or at the office at the address shown at the top of this letter. The Department will consider new information you submit and take appropriate action. The Department endeavors to assist you in your compliance efforts.

Should you have any questions about the content of this letter or desire any follow-up technical assistance, please contact me at (971) 263-1095.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SC', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Shane Cossel
WQ Compliance Specialist

ec: Mike Hiatt, DEQ
Justin Sterger, DEQ
Curtis Hollibaugh, City of Wasco
Tyler Henricksen, City of Wasco
Oregon Records Management Solutions