



City of Cambridge

37.

IN CITY COUNCIL

June 21, 1999

COUNCILLOR BORN

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to report to the City Council whether the information requested in the attached letter from the EPA has been provided by the City of Cambridge and, if so, to provide copies of the City's response to the City Council.

In City Council June 21, 1999.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

MD Margaret Drury

ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 1

JOHN F. KENNEDY FEDERAL BUILDING
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02203-0001

#37

CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Docket No. 99-308-002

October 15, 1998

Mr. Robert Healy
City Manager
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

DEP OCT 19 1998

Dear Mr. Healy:

As an official in a community in the Mystic/Alewife Basin, you are aware that the Mystic River and Alewife Brook are important resources. EPA and DEP are taking actions in the Basin to address sources of pollution with the goal of improving water quality so that the River will support the designated recreational uses.

The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority recently finalized a Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Facilities Plan, which includes CSO controls in Cambridge and Somerville, to further minimize the impacts of CSO discharges to the Mystic/Alewife Basin. As part of the planning work, stormwater pollutant loads have been identified as a major cause of water quality standards violations. Water quality information gathered by the MWRA Harbor Studies Group and others has confirmed that violations of the Class B (fishable/swimmable) standards occur during both dry and wet weather conditions.

On December 31, 1997, DEP issued water quality determinations for all receiving waters impacted by CSO discharges from MWRA and the cities of Chelsea, Boston, and Cambridge. DEP is issuing a Variance to MWRA and the cities of Cambridge and Somerville for CSC discharges to the Mystic/Alewife Basin. As a condition of the variance, MWRA will proceed to implement its recommended CSO Control Plan in the Mystic/Alewife Basin: sewer separation in Cambridge, separation of baffle manholes in Somerville, and upgrading the Somerville Marginal CSO Treatment facility. This level of control will reduce untreated CSO discharges to the Mystic/Alewife basin to four or fewer events in a typical year. The purpose of the variance is to allow DEP and EPA to gather additional water quality information over the course of the variance (three years) to determine if higher levels of CSO control are required in the Mystic/Alewife Basin.

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A comprehensive strategy to address CSO and stormwater discharges is necessary to achieve improvements in water quality in the Mystic/Alewife Basin. For many years, water quality in the Mystic river has suffered from discharges of polluted stormwater. Water quality sampling shows that there are violations of state standards for fecal coliform bacteria during both wet weather and dry weather in Alewife Brook and the Mystic River, indicating the potential presence of unpermitted discharges and water quality impacts due to stormwater discharges. In some places, sewer pipes may be illegally connected to storm drains, leading to direct discharges of sewage into the river.

EPA and DEP intend to take aggressive action to eliminate illegal sanitary discharges to stormdrains and to require improved stormwater management as part of an overall strategy to improve water quality in the Mystic/Alewife Basin. If necessary, this will include enforcement action. This letter addresses the issue of illicit discharges to storm drains. In the future we also intend to address the more common problem of polluted stormwater discharges during wet weather.

EPA has already required action in the lower Charles Basin to address illegal dry weather sanitary discharges contributing to violations of water quality standards. The lower ten communities in the Charles Basin are in the process of identifying and eliminating illegal sanitary discharges to the storm drain system or have completed these activities. Six of the communities are under EPA enforcement orders to complete this work. These efforts have resulted in measurable water quality benefits. The communities of Cambridge, Somerville, Arlington, Belmont, Winchester, and Medford will all be required to undertake activities to identify and eliminate such discharges to the Mystic/Alewife Basin.

This letter asks that the municipality provide certain information which will be useful in the identification of illicit discharges.

Section 308(a) of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. §1318(a), authorizes EPA to require any person to provide information to determine whether there has been a violation of the Act. Pursuant to that section, EPA hereby requires that the City of Cambridge submit the following information regarding dry weather discharges from stormwater discharge pipes to EPA and DEP by July 1, 1999. Dry weather is defined as a period of at least 72 hours in which there was no precipitation and no snow melt.

1. Maps showing the location and size of each of the City's stormwater outfalls. The maps shall also delineate the runoff area tributary to each pipe.

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2. Maps showing the location of any combination sewer/stormdrain manholes (common manholes), sewer underdrains, and siphon structures in the community sewer system.
3. Visual observation of each of the City's stormwater outfalls into Alewife Brook and any associated tributaries to determine whether the discharge is active during dry weather. The City shall conduct at least two rounds of visual observations at all stormwater discharge locations. Visual observations shall include an estimate of the flow rate, as well as a description of odor, color, turbidity, floatables (solids and liquids), and solids. Any point sources not owned by the Town which are observed to be discharging during dry weather shall also be noted. The findings of these inspections shall be documented in a report.
4. Sampling of each of the active dry weather discharges from stormwater outfalls to determine whether the discharge contains pollutants which would indicate illicit discharges to the system. At a minimum, the City shall sample each active discharge on two separate days for fecal coliform bacteria, enterococcus, e. coli, surfactants (as MBAS), ammonia-nitrogen, conductivity, and fluoride. Visual observations of odor, color, turbidity, floatables (solids and liquids), and solids shall also be recorded. All sampling, preservation, and analyses of samples shall be in accordance with EPA approved methods found at 40 CFR § 136. The results of the sampling shall be documented in a report.
5. A plan to identify and eliminate illegal sewer discharges to the stormdrains for areas where sampling results indicate the presence of sanitary sewer flows.

Failure to provide the information requested may result in the EPA taking an action under Section 309 of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319, which provides for administrative, civil, and criminal penalties.

Information submitted in response to this information request should be addressed as follows:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region I
John F. Kennedy Federal Building
Boston MA 02203
Attention: Brian Pitt SEW

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Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
Northeast Region
205a Lowell Street
Wilmington, MA 01887
Attention: Lisa Dell'Anno

If you have any questions regarding this letter please call
Brian Pitt of the Water Technical Unit at (617) 565-3318 or Lisa
Dell'Anno of MADEP at (978) 661-7665.

Sincerely,

Ira Leighton

Ira Leighton, Director
Office of Environmental Stewardship

cc: Steven L. White, Cambridge DPW Dep. Commissioner
Steve Lipman, MADEP/Boston
David Ferris, MADEP, NERO
Michael Hornbrook, MWRA

~~_____~~ *Betsy Solviter - H. 886, 3494021*

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myst308ca.wp (9\23) *Orlodan* *P. work 3494855*



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Sincerely,

Ira Leighton, Director
Office of Environmental Stewardship

cc: Steven L. White, Cambridge DPW Dep. Commissioner
Steve Lipman, MADEP/Boston
David Ferris, MADEP, NERO
Michael Hornbrook, MWRA

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Owen ~~to~~ Fred J. Inger, City Solicitor - #886, 3494021
myst308ca.wp (9\23) Orrodan P. work 3494855

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Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

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D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

Consent Order # 37 *CM 294*

Councillor Born report on whether the information requested from the EPA has been provided by the City and provide copies to the City Council.

In City Council June 21, 1999

ORDER ADOPTED