

13 Holly Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
November 22, 1985

Cambridge City Council
City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Councillors:

As a Cambridge resident, I write to express my concern about the lack of City representation on the Advisory Board to the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA).

The Advisory Board was created, under the same statute creating the MWRA, to represent the interests of all communities receiving MWRA sewerage collection and treatment and/or water supply services. It has powers of approval over the MWRA Annual Operating and Capital Budgets (which directly affect communities' water and sewer bills), and of review and comment over all aspects of the MWRA's activities; including the rate setting process, operational issues, and long range planning. In addition, the Advisory Board elects three members of the Authority's Board of Directors. As an example of Advisory Board actions, I enclose a copy of recent comments to the Environmental Protection Agency and the MWRA on a draft permit regulating sewerage discharges to Boston Harbor and to the Charles and Mystic Rivers from the Deer Island plant and combined sewer overflows.

As a major user of the MWRA's sewerage collection and treatment facilities, it is in the City's best interest to be represented on the Advisory Board. Although Cambridge's City Manager was a regular attendee from last January until May, Cambridge has had no representative at Advisory Board meetings or on Advisory Board working committees since that time. Appeals to the City Manager's office have produced no substitute delegate appointment; hence my letter to bring this to your attention. I am a gubernatorial appointee to the Advisory Board, representing recreational users' interests in Boston Harbor; I cannot represent my City's interest as well.

There are three ways in which Cambridge can be represented at the Advisory Board's regular meetings, and on the several working committees directing Advisory Board comments on MWRA policies. The City's interests can be represented by:

- the Mayor, as Chief Executive Officer;
- the Mayor's permanently assigned delegate,;
- a substitute delegate, authorized in writing to vote at a particular full Advisory Board meeting.

I hope this letter helps clarify how Cambridge can become more active on the Advisory Board; please feel free to contact me at my home or office, or to call the Advisory Board's offices at 742-7561, for further information. I look forward to seeing a Cambridge representative at the next Advisory Board meeting on December 12, 1985.

Thank you for your attention to
this matter,



Ann Brewster Weeks
Advisory Board Treasurer

13 Holly Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
497-5505 (home)
354-0167 (office)

enclosure

MASSACHUSETTS WATER RESOURCES AUTHORITY

ADVISORY BOARD

SIX BEACON STREET
SUITE 925
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02108

JOHN F. PIOTTI
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

TELEPHONE
(617) 742-7561

October 1, 1985

COMMENTS TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY ON ITS DRAFT NPDES PERMIT REGULATING DISCHARGES OF THE MASSACHUSETTS WATER RESOURCES AUTHORITY

The MWRA Advisory Board (the "Advisory Board") was established to oversee the budget, management practices, and policy directions of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (the "Authority"), and to represent the interests of those communities to which the Authority provides water and sewer services. The Advisory Board is pleased to offer these comments on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) draft NPDES permit, which regulates the Authority's discharges under the Clean Water Act.

GENERAL COMMENTS

It is obvious that the Authority will be unable to comply with the requirements of the permit on the day it is issued, or for many years thereafter. At the same time, the Advisory Board recognizes that the language calling for secondary treatment and prohibiting the discharge of sludge into the harbor is required by law, and that the EPA does not intend to fine the Authority for non-compliance as long as clean-up efforts are progressing on schedule. More important than some of the permit requirements, then, is the timetable for compliance with those requirements. Presumably, such a schedule would appear in a supplement to the permit, or possibly as an Administrative Order issued separately.

The Advisory Board requests that any compliance schedule be prepared with adequate opportunity for public comment, possibly

including a public hearing. We firmly believe this approach to be warranted in this situation, where the specifics of the compliance schedule are so integral to identifying the merits of the permit.

As an illustration of this point, consider how a particular timetable could affect the Authority's decision on interim sludge management. A most expeditious schedule might force the Authority to adopt a disposal strategy not because of its merits, but because it could be implemented on time. Thus, the permit requirement to cease harbor discharges could result in radically different sludge disposal practices, depending on the time frame for compliance.

For such reasons, the comments contained herein are necessarily incomplete; they omit reference to items the Advisory Board might view differently under different compliance schedules. As such, the EPA should not interpret any failure to comment on specific requirements as tacit approval of those provisions.

A few specific comments are provided as follows:

Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs)

The Advisory Board finds fault with the provision allowing EPA to require the Authority to assume responsibility for CSO projects that may go unfinished by a community. (Page 11, Part I) This provision may make the Authority liable for fines and expenditures more properly paid by the individual communities. This is not to say that the Authority should not take an active role in CSO projects undertaken by communities, or in undertaking needed projects on its own; but rather than encouraging Authority-community cooperation and creative problem-solving, this provision of the permit may promote adversarial relationships that reduce local initiatives and hamper project completions.

Monitoring

The permit includes extensive monitoring requirements. (Page 6, Part I) The Advisory Board confines its comments to monitoring of the last four effluent characteristics listed on Page 6, as we believe these to be the most expensive and controversial. It is our understanding, that tests for NOAEL, NOEC, LC50, and volatile organic compounds are performed, primarily, to determine the impact of industrial discharges. As such, we would recommend that the EPA and the Authority develop strategies so that the cost of such monitoring will be paid by industrial polluters. At the same time, it should also be noted that the Advisory Board is not convinced that the stated frequency of such testing is warranted.

Flow Level

The draft permit omits defining the volume of flow that can be discharged by the Authority from POTW outfalls. (Page 6, Part I) This is a natural omission, since the flow level will be influenced by a number of factors - including I/I reductions and system growth - that will be considered by the Authority over time. The Advisory Board comments on it here for several reasons:

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2) because a certain prescribed flow level may, in effect, serve as a moratorium on growth in member communities without stating so directly; and

3) because flow level will be influenced by certain system

improvements (such as I/I reduction), the rate of which will be determined, in part, by EPA's compliance schedule. (Flow level, like other permit specifications, must be reviewed in relation to the time-frame for compliance, as recommended under GENERAL COMMENTS).

It is for reasons like these that the Advisory Board views the determination of POTW flow level (as it will appear in the final permit) as a decision warranting public review and comment.

NPDES Review Group:

Lydia Goodhue

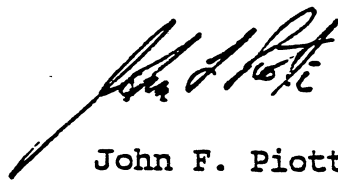
Richard Innes

Stephen Seigal

William Sequino

Ann Weeks

For the MWRA Advisory Board,



John F. Piotti

Executive Secretary

Comm #7 - Referred to Comptroller
for Report paid to December
16, 1985

Motion of Myron Debraj

RECEIVED BY
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1985 NOV 25 PM 1:42

CAMBRIDGE MA.

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November 22, 1985

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Ref. to C. Mgr. for report.

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Ann Brewster Weeks
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enclosure

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October 1, 1985

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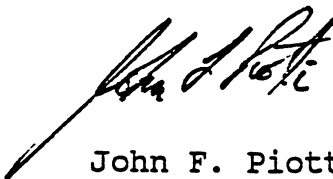
Richard Innes

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Ann Weeks

For the MWRA Advisory Board,



John F. Piotti

Executive Secretary

RECEIVED BY
OFFICE OF CITY CLERK

1985 NOV 25 PM 1:42

CAMBRIDGE MA.

13 Holly Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
November 22, 1985

Ms. Ruth Murphy
Administrative Assistant to
the Cambridge City Council
City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Ms. Murphy:

As we discussed on the phone this morning, I enclose the original and nine copies of a letter to the City Council expressing my concern about Cambridge's lack of representation on the Advisory Board to the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority. I hope you have the opportunity to consider this during Monday's Council meeting; I look forward to hearing from you on this, and to seeing a Cambridge delegate at the next Advisory Board meeting on December 12, 1985.

Thank you,



Ann Weeks
Treasurer and Gubernatorial
Appointee-recreational interests
in Boston Harbor
Advisory Board, MWRA

enclosures

#17
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OFFICE OF CITY CLERK

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Lydia Goodhue

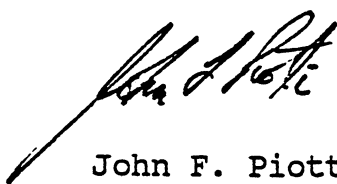
Richard Innes

Stephen Seigal

William Sequino

Ann Weeks

For the MWRA Advisory Board,



John F. Piotti

Executive Secretary

*Referred to Engr
for Report prior
to December 16, 1985*

7.

F-394

Comm. from Ann Brewster Weeks, Advisory Board member to the Mass. Water Resources Authority (MWRA) expressing concern over a lack of City representation on said Board.

In City Council,

November 25, 1985

11/25/85

Referred to the
City Manager for
Report -

Copy sent to the
City Manager 11/27/85
mh