

FOR RELEASE: April 28, 2011
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Ohio EPA Schedules Meeting to Discuss Permit Modification for Elyria's Wastewater Treatment Plant

A proposed change to Elyria's wastewater treatment plant discharge permit will be the focus of a May 12, 2011, Ohio EPA public meeting. The information session and public hearing will begin at 6:30 p.m. at Elyria City Hall, 131 Court Street, Elyria.

At the request of the city, Ohio EPA has issued a proposed permit modification for the discharge of mercury and total dissolved solids (TDS) from the city's wastewater treatment plant located at 1194 Gulf Road.

If given final approval, the modification would allow the city to continue discharging mercury to the Black River at levels that exceed the 1.3 parts per trillion (ppt) limit required in its existing permit.

To achieve the 1.3 ppt mercury discharge limit, the city would have to install extremely costly technology that would result in substantial economic impacts. Ohio EPA has evaluated the cost and feasibility of this approach and determined that a more effective way to lower the mercury impact is to reduce the amount of mercury being put into the wastewater system. Therefore, in order to receive a variance from the mercury limit, the city would be required to identify the sources of mercury that go to its plant and take steps to minimize the mercury releases from those sources.

The modification also would allow the city to continue discharging TDS to the Black River at levels that exceed the 1,551 parts per million (ppm) limit required in its existing permit.

It is not technically feasible for the city to modify its wastewater plant to meet its existing TDS limit. Reducing TDS coming to the treatment plant by establishing pretreatment requirements for its industrial users is the most appropriate means for the city's wastewater plant to meet its current limit. Granting the city a variance from its current limit would provide adequate time for the industries to identify treatment alternatives, evaluate technical feasibility and determine costs, cost effectiveness and affordability. It also would allow for a more thorough analysis of any financial impacts to the industries and of social and economic impacts to the surrounding area if the city's wastewater plant is required to meet the limit in its existing permit.

The proposed permit modification will become final unless:

- an adjudication hearing is requested;
- Ohio EPA withdraws and/or revises the proposed modification after considering public comments; or
- U.S. EPA disapproves the modification.

Interested parties have until May 5, 2011, to request an adjudication hearing at Ohio EPA. Requests for an adjudication hearing should be submitted to: Ohio EPA Legal Records Section, P.O. Box 1049, Columbus, Ohio 43216-1049. Additional information is available by calling (614) 644-3037.

Comments on the proposed permit modification may be presented at the May 12 hearing or submitted in writing to: Ohio EPA, Division of Surface Water, Permits Processing Unit, P.O. Box 1049, Columbus, Ohio 43216-1049. The public comment period ends May 19, 2011. Following consideration of public comments, Ohio EPA will make a final decision on the permit modification.

The proposed permit modification and related materials are available for review at Ohio EPA's Northeast District Office in Twinsburg by first calling (330) 963-1200.