

**May 07, 2012**

**News Release**

*For Immediate Release*

**Council Considers Missouri DNR Agreement**

Springfield City Council will tonight consider an agreement with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to continue improvements to the City's wastewater (sewer) collection and treatment systems. The agreement amends and extends an existing agreement between the City and MDNR which the City has been implementing for years. The proposed amendment to the existing agreement will now be filed with the Springfield Circuit Court for approval.

Under the existing legal agreement, the City has made extensive progress in controlling wet weather-related sewer overflows. The City has fully complied with the existing agreement. The modification and extension is called an Amended Consent Judgment (ACJ). The ACJ requires the City to spend \$50 million over the next seven years to implement an Early Action Program (EAP). The EAP will fix a significant amount of deteriorated clay pipe sewer line and further address wet weather-related sewer overflows. The ACJ responds to more stringent regulatory requirements. The environmental agencies have "raised the bar" said City Manager, Greg Burris.

Wastewater services are important because they protect water quality, safeguard public health and support future development. Springfield's wastewater services are also important to the environmental and economic health of the State of Missouri because of the significant water-related recreation and tourism in the Springfield metropolitan area.

A spokesman from the Missouri Attorney General's Office stated, "The Department of Natural Resources and the Attorney General's Office appreciate the City's cooperation and commitment in investing in its sewer collection and treatment system in order to protect human health and the environment. This investment will advance economic opportunities and pave the way for a better and healthier quality of life."

The improvements are needed to reduce the release of untreated sewage from the sewer system in response to heavy rains. Such releases can spill onto city streets and occasionally, onto private property.

The City of Springfield has been working on the issue of wet weather-related sewage releases for many years. Previous efforts to address sewer system releases were guided by an earlier Consent Decree with the MDNR, signed in 1995, which called for about \$17 million in sewer improvements. Adding in other, voluntary improvements before and after, the city has spent about \$133 million on sewer improvements in the past 20 years.

Having fully complied with the 1995 Consent Decree, the City began negotiations with state regulators in April of 2008 on the next phase of improvements, which are memorialize in the ACJ announced today. Through negotiations, MDNR and city officials agreed upon the methods and timing for further reducing overflows, which will be funded through wastewater fees.

Based on the recommendations of a city-appointed citizen task force, the City Council approved rate increases last May of \$4.29 per month (26%) beginning July 1, 2011 and \$5.53 per month (28%) July 1, 2012, followed by more modest annual increases for the following four-year period. Steep increases at the beginning of the EAP were required to fund improvement projects. With the increase planned for July 2012, the sewer portion of the average household's utility bill is expected to be about \$25.27 per

month, up from \$19.75 per month in the current year and about \$15.46 in the year prior to rate increases needed to fund the EAP.

Along with the EAP, the Amended Consent Judgment requires the City to develop a long-term Overflow Control Program to provide improvements to conveyance and treatment of wet weather-related wastewater flows following completion of the Early Action Program in 2018. The Overflow Control Program will be submitted to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources on December 31, 2013. The City will use an adaptive process to continue to evaluate and update the Overflow Control Plan until it is finalized in 2018. It is likely to call for significant additional investments by the City to further reduce wet weather-related sewer overflows. Data gathered through Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Studies and pilot projects in the Early Action Program will be used to identify the most affordable and cost-effective strategies for the Overflow Control Program.

For more information, contact: Stephen Meyer, Department of Environmental Services, (417) 864-1919.

View a [video about the City's Clean Water Services](#).

**About Springfield Environmental Services Department:**

The City of Springfield continues to provide an award-winning clean water service and biosolids management. Springfield is the recipient of the National Association of Clean Water Agencies Platinum Peak Performance Award for the Southwest Wastewater Treatment Plant and a Gold Peak Performance Award for the Northwest Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Southwest Plant also won Missouri Water Environment Association Plant of the Year.