



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Official Statement from the Niagara Falls Water Board

On Wednesday, October 4, 2017, a wet weather event occurred in Niagara Falls that resulted in a discharge from the NFWB's wastewater system. The NFWB discharge was an overflow that resulted from volume levels exceeding existing storage and plant processing capacity. This discharge was immediately reported to DEC officials, pursuant to their recent instructions.

NFWB continues to work to optimize its existing wastewater treatment system, and is committed to providing the best treatment possible using its existing technology.

The board is aware of the DEC's statement alleging that the resulting discharge violated water quality standards because of its color. The root cause of such overflow occurrences—of which the DEC is well aware and has been working with the NFWB on—is a direct result of outdated infrastructure and system design limitations that impact overall facility capacity during heavy volume periods. The NFWB also has no way of controlling for color or turbidity with respect to the overflow water during a wet weather event.

While outdated infrastructure and system design limitations impact overall facility capacity during heavy volume periods, extensive efforts do remain underway to identify potential short and long-term solutions to mitigate these existing facility constraints, which in effect cause such wet weather discharge and overflow situations.

From an overall environmental impact mitigation perspective, the NFWB maintains strong support for massive—and overdue—state and federal investment in capital infrastructure improvements at outdated wastewater treatment facilities across the Great Lakes watershed. True, lasting, state-of-the-art solutions to the challenges facing aging wastewater treatment systems may be too costly for localities to fund, and will require partnership and participation with state and federal elected officials.

The NFWB remains wholly committed to proper wastewater treatment and the highest quality treatment and distribution of drinking water consistent with public health laws and regulations, as well as the public enjoyment of natural resources, the protection of fish and wildlife, the economic development of the city of Niagara Falls and the general well being of the surrounding area.

The NFWB will continue to provide periodic public and ratepayer updates on overflow and other discharge matters as such information becomes available. Updates will be available at www.NFWB.org.

After further review of this matter, please be advised that the NFWB may also issue a supplemental statement or follow-up response.

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