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Rockdale Water Resources

ROCKDALE WATER RESOURCES

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Response to Georgia EPD Announcement of the Reinsurance of Permits for Atlanta's Combined Sewer System

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Georgia Environmental Protection Division (Ga. EPD) announced on August 20 the reissuance of permits for the City of Atlanta's combined sewer system (CSS). This allows the city to discharge untreated wastewater into the South River during heavy rain events. While we commend the steps taken by Ga. EPD to limit the number of overflows per year from the city's CSS, there still appears to be an allowance for the city to continue to be exempted to a great extent from CSS overflows that are directly discharged into waters of the state – i.e. the South River.

Rockdale County's sewer collection system is separate from its storm water collection system and therefore has separate permits for each system. The sewer permits require the sanitary system to be operated and/or maintained in a manner that limits the infiltration of rain water in amounts sufficient to result in a system overflow.

Expectation from Ga. EPD of Rockdale County is for the compliant operation of its sewer system in both dry and wet weather without allowing system overflows. Under a "zero tolerance" for the metro-area – that apparently does not include the city of Atlanta – overflow events of raw sewage from the sanitary collection system that reached waters of the state are cited as violations of the Clean Water Act. Rockdale County allocates over \$500,000 per year for the repair and detection of rainwater inflow and infiltration into its sanitary sewer collection system.

As a result of the reissuance of the city of Atlanta's permits, the financial burden of improving the water quality within the South River should not be placed solely upon those dischargers into the South and Yellow Rivers who are downstream of Atlanta. What is sought from Ga EPD is consistency and equity for all wastewater system operators within the state of Georgia as its "clean water" goals are implemented.

Dwight Wicks
Director

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