



## **Chief Engineer and General Manager Statement Regarding December 30, 2021 Sewer Spill – 1/5/22**

The Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts (Sanitation Districts) manage the wastewater from roughly 5.5 million people and convert it into recycled water, renewable energy and recycled materials.

On December 30<sup>th</sup>, approximately 25 feet of a 4-foot diameter concrete sewer collapsed causing a blockage of the flow, which forced wastewater to spill from two manholes upstream of the collapse (on 212th Street in the City of Carson). Sanitation Districts' staff and emergency contractors worked continuously to completely stop the spill by the evening of December 31<sup>st</sup>. The spill was stopped by pumping the flow around the collapsed section. Eight portable pumps and over 6,000 feet of piping were installed to bypass all the flow. In total, an estimated 8.5 million gallons spilled onto a street and then into the storm drain system, the Dominguez Channel and ultimately to the ocean. Seven beaches were closed as precautionary measure.

Unfortunately, the spill impacted residents who live nearby. Our staff spent December 31<sup>st</sup> cleaning the surfaces that the spill flowed over. The street was cleaned again on January 3 and 5 by a third-party cleaning company. We are monitoring water quality at 19 locations, including onshore and offshore of beaches that were closed as well as the LA Harbor and Dominguez Channel. Dissolved oxygen levels in the channel are at normal levels and no odor is being produced. We are sharing data with Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and, at the time of this writing, five of seven beaches had been reopened on January 3. We are hopeful that the two remaining beaches will be opened soon. As an additional precaution, we are inspecting the condition of nearby sewers and will add segments that are in poor condition to our emergency repair efforts.

The Sanitation Districts have a vigorous sewer evaluation program to identify and track aging sewers. We also have a capital improvement program to proactively repair and replace sewer segments that are near the end of their service life. Our staff uses cameras to assess sewer condition and determine if repair is needed. Over the last 20 to 30 years, our sewer evaluation and capital improvement programs have greatly reduced the number of spills from our sewer system. However, this segment failed during a record rainfall event while its replacement was under construction.

We are investigating the causes of this sewer collapse and have retained the services of a third-party consultant to help fully investigate this failure and review all our programs, procedures and methods looking for potential improvements. A report of findings and recommendations will be shared with the public.

I deeply regret that the spill occurred. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we learn from this incident and improve our programs to better serve you.

Sincerely

  
Robert C. Ferrante