METROPOLITAN
SEWER DISTRICT
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MSDGC NEWS RELEASE

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The Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSD)

MSD Developing Assessment Tool, Could Lead to Nationally Recognized Practices and Reporting Measures

Tool Designed for Utilities with Federal Consent Decree Orders

Cincinnati, OH – The Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSD) is developing a new benchmark assessment tool designed to measure utility performance needed to comply with Consent Decrees under the Federal Clean Water Act. The tool will assist MSD, and potentially other utilities, to benchmark and evaluate performance and practices against utility peers, and develop strategies for improvements as needed.

Wastewater utilities operating under a Consent Decree, which is mandated by Federal regulators to help meet requirements outlined in the Federal Clean Water Act, must meet specific, stringent standards to protect public health and the environment.

"This robust tool incorporates best practices and performance measures in asset management, sustainability, regulatory compliance, modeling, and watershed planning and management," said MSD Executive Director Tony Parrott. "It will provide objective qualitative measures in comparison to similarly situated utilities across the country, which will help ensure that the public is receiving the best value possible for utility services."

The assessment tool evaluates components ranging from environmental issues including regulatory compliance and water quality, to the planning, design and construction of the utility's infrastructure, as well as operations and maintenance including treatment and watershed management. The benchmarking process also evaluates the utility's communication, legal support and overall stakeholder management.

As part of the Clean Water Act, the federal government called for the elimination of sanitary sewer overflows and a reduction of combined sewer overflows. This action affected every wastewater system in the country, including MSD. Increased scrutiny brought the issue to the forefront in the late 1990s, as the Department of Justice and Environmental Protection Agency began enforcing the ruling in large cities and leveling heavy civil penalties on those out of compliance.

A consent decree is a negotiated agreement that establishes a formal remediation program to address compliance issues.

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Every day, the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSD) protects the public's health and the environment through professional water reclamation and watershed management. As we collect and treat more than 180 million gallons of sewage daily from 43 municipalities, villages, and townships in Greater Cincinnati through 3,000 miles of sanitary or combined sewers, MSD serves you with honesty, integrity, accountability, and respect.

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MSD has been working with State and Federal authorities to design the best approach to improve water quality through capital improvements and other operational and maintenance measures. Such efforts are intended to maximize the flow of untreated sewage to the proper treatment facility and to eliminate any overflows or discharges of untreated sewage from its facility onto public and private property.

"The Water Environment Research Foundation (WERF) is excited to participate and is extremely encouraged by this great work MSD is doing. Moreover, this tool will be of tremendous value to utilities across the country and have lasting positive impacts on the wastewater industry," explained Glenn Reinhardt, Executive Director of WERF, America's leading independent scientific research organization dedicated to wastewater and stormwater issues.

MSD officials expect to complete the new assessment tool this spring, and then look to engage the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, WERF, and other industry organizations and wastewater utilities to further refine and utilize the tool.

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