



**For Immediate Release
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Frederick Sewage Plant Upgrade Prompts Clean Water Advocates to Withdraw Clean Water Act Lawsuit

Potomac Riverkeeper and Environmental Integrity Project's Review of Frederick's Discharge Reports Shows Pollution Reductions and Compliance with State Permit Limits That Will Protect the Monocacy and Potomac Rivers

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Washington, D.C. – The Potomac Riverkeeper Network on Monday dismissed its lawsuit against The City of Frederick, Maryland, over nitrogen pollution violations at the city's wastewater treatment plant after the city successfully completed a \$45 million upgrade to the plant.

The suit, which did not seek any monetary compensation, sought only to compel the upgrades mandated by the State of Maryland to have been completed in 2011. The improvements were finished in May 2018.

"We filed this lawsuit earlier this year because the sewage plant upgrade project had been delayed for several years—and we wanted to make sure the project finally was completed," said Dean Naujoks, the Potomac Riverkeeper. "We are happy to say that the new wastewater treatment system appears to be working well, which is good news for the Monocacy River. This is a victory for clean water and we thank the City of Frederick."

"We all agree that this is indeed good news. The City is meeting important environmental standards. The lawsuit filed by Riverkeepers was not the impetus for the City to have made the improvements to the treatment plant, but citizen input and requests for accountability are appreciated," said Mayor Michael O'Connor. "Since 2010, the City has been working as quickly as possible to complete the \$45.8 million wastewater treatment plant upgrades necessary."

"I appreciate Riverkeepers' good intentions," O'Connor said. "No one takes environmental responsibility more seriously than I do, and I can say the same is true for our wastewater plant operators."

In 2017, before the upgrades to the plant were completed, the plant, which is located at 100 Treatment Plant Road in Frederick, exceeded the amount of discharged nitrogen pollution into the Monocacy River according to state and federal records. The plant also exceeded its limits during the years 2013-2016, records show.

Since the upgrades to the plant were brought online earlier this year, that pollution level has dropped substantially. "Preventing nitrogen discharge has been the No. 1 priority of our treatment plant capital improvements plan, and if we could have completed the work sooner, we would have," O'Connor said. "In fact, since May of this year, we have not only met but surpassed those standards."

"It's our job to work as a watchdog, so we reviewed four months of discharge reports from the Frederick sewage plant after the upgrade project was completed in May," said Sylvia Lam, attorney for the Environmental Integrity Project, which represented the Potomac Riverkeeper Network in the legal action. "Those records show a real improvement. Based on the reports shared by the City, we are assured that the plant will now no longer discharge excessive amounts of nitrogen pollution. We commend the City for taking action to clean up the Monocacy River and downstream Chesapeake Bay."

The Monocacy River – a popular destination for kayaking, fishing and wildlife photography -- flows through protected Civil War battlefields into the Potomac River and then the Chesapeake Bay. Nitrogen pollution is a leading cause of algal blooms and low-oxygen "dead zones" in the waterways.

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About Potomac Riverkeeper Network

Potomac Riverkeeper Network is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization with three regional Waterkeeper branches: Potomac Riverkeeper, Upper Potomac Riverkeeper and Shenandoah Riverkeeper. Our mission is to protect the public's right to clean water in our rivers and streams. We stop pollution to promote safe drinking water, protect healthy habitats, and enhance public use and enjoyment.

For more information, visit <http://www.potomacriverkeepernetwork.org>.

About Environmental Integrity Project

The Environmental Integrity Project is a 16-year-old nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, based in Washington D.C., dedicated to enforcing environmental laws and holding polluters and governments accountable to protect public health.

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