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1 message

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Tue, Feb 15, 2011 at 7:11 AM

Palatine fighting water agency's proposal

By Kimberly Pohl Daily Herald  
Article updated: 2/14/2011 11:03 PM

Palatine officials are fighting a Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago initiative they say could cost village residents millions of dollars.

The council on Monday agreed to write a letter of concern to the acting director, president and board of the water agency, which again is pushing for municipalities to be responsible for eliminating excessive infiltration and inflow out of their sewer systems for amounts totaling more than 150 gallons per capita, per day.

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Infiltration and inflow are the groundwater and stormwater that enter a sanitary storm sewer through defective pipes and manhole walls, as well as connected roof downspouts, drains and connections between storm and sanitary sewers.

Mayor Jim Schwantz's letter also requests that the MWRD work cooperatively with the 125 municipalities in its jurisdiction.

In 2008, it cost the water district between \$18 million and \$25 million to pump and treat infiltration and inflow over the 150 gpcda threshold, which village officials consider somewhat arbitrary given it goes beyond the objectives and requirements of the federal and state Environmental Protection Agency.

That expense would be passed along to municipalities and likely homeowners who experience basement backups and sanitary sewer overflows.

Further, the district in 1992 estimated addressing residual infiltration and inflow would cost \$1.76 billion for additional local sewer rehabilitation.

"This excessive cost would place a financial burden not only directly upon the municipalities, but on both (their) and the District's customers without providing a clear benefit," states Schwantz's letter, drafted by Village Engineer Mike Danecki.

The MWRD is attempting to implement the excessive infiltration and inflow limit in conjunction with new federal EPA regulations likely going into effect next year concerning sanitary sewer overflows from publicly owned treatment works.

Village Manager Reid Ottesen said that while taking stormwater out of sanitary sewers is a good practice, the MWRD and municipalities should work together to address the issue based on current data, best practices and engineering standards in a cost-effective way.

“Just in Palatine alone this would be well into the millions of dollars in additional cost for the village and our residents,” Ottesen said.

More municipalities are expected to reach out to the MWRD with similar concerns.

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