

Contact: Jason Flanders, Staff Attorney
(o) 415-856-0444 x106
jason@baykeeper.org

Baykeeper Settles Sewage Spill Lawsuit with South San Francisco

(Bay Area, CA) March 10, 2011 – The City of South San Francisco (“City”) and San Francisco Baykeeper (“Baykeeper”) jointly announce today that the South San Francisco City Council approved a settlement agreement resolving disputes regarding sewage spills in South San Francisco. The settlement agreement will allow the City to dedicate its resources to implementing collection system programs that will result in a further reduction of the City’s sewage spill rate, rather than spending money on litigation. “While the City’s collection system outperforms many others, the programs in the consent decree will assist the City in becoming one of the best, while maintaining a reasonable rate structure,” said Terry White, Director of Public Works.

Baykeeper is a San Francisco-based environmental organization dedicated to protecting the water quality of San Francisco Bay. Over the last several years, Baykeeper has brought numerous Clean Water Act lawsuits against Bay Area cities to address the region-wide problem of sewage spills to the Bay. “In 2010, over a third of sewage spills statewide occurred in the Bay Area,” said Jason Flanders, Staff Attorney at Baykeeper. “We’re pleased to have secured an agreement with the City of South San Francisco that will reduce sewage spills to the Bay and help improve the overall health of our watershed.”

Under the settlement agreement, the City will reduce spills from the City’s collection system over a five year period and continue to improve its operations and maintenance practices to meet or exceed industry standards. Prior to this lawsuit, more than \$70 million was invested on capital improvements to increase the capacity of its wastewater infrastructure.

The City will also fund a \$300,000 sewer lateral replacement grant program to provide up to \$2,500 to eligible South San Francisco homeowners on a first-come, first-served basis for replacement of defective sewer laterals. According to Mayor Kevin Mullin, “The sewer lateral replacement program will assist local homeowners to replace their sewer lateral lines while also protecting the environment in South San Francisco.” Replacing leaking sewer laterals decreases the amount of rain water that gets into the sewage system and thereby reduces the likelihood of sewage spills during wet weather.

As an environmental mitigation measure, the City will also provide \$150,000 to the Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment to fund non-Baykeeper projects to benefit Bay water quality.

For further information please contact Public Works Director Terry White ((650) 877-8551) or special counsel Gregory Newmark ((510) 808-2000) for the City or Staff Attorney Jason Flanders ((415) 856-0444, ext. 106) for Baykeeper.

San Francisco Baykeeper is the Bay’s pollution watchdog, using science and advocacy to enforce clean water laws and hold polluters accountable. For more information, visit us at www.baykeeper.org. ###