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For Immediate Release

Customer Alert – Increased Sewer Plant Odors in Allentown

Operational issue and solids buildup result in increased odors near the wastewater treatment plant.

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Allentown, PA – Lehigh County Authority (LCA) is working to address an operational issue at the Kline’s Island Wastewater Treatment Plant, located on Union Street in Allentown, which may cause an increase in unpleasant odors emanating from the plant, impacting residential customers nearby. The issue relates to a buildup of excess “solids” at the facility, which treats more than 30 million gallons of sewage per day from customers in Allentown and 14 other surrounding communities.

Solids are a natural byproduct of the process for treating wastewater, in which solids and organic material are separated from the water. The solids are typically "digested" by the biological processes at the plant, and the remaining material applied as fertilizer on farm fields or disposed of at a landfill.

Over the past few weeks, LCA staff have noticed a buildup of solids at the plant that has disrupted the normal treatment process, leading to some odor complaints from customers in the vicinity of the plant. While the buildup of solids can be a normal part of the treatment process, it’s a more significant problem this summer due to a mechanical problem that occurred last month at the LCA industrial pretreatment plant in Fogelsville, which sent a higher-than-normal load of solids down to Allentown. In normal conditions, the solids are removed at the plant in Fogelsville, so they do not impact the plant in Allentown. The mechanical issue at the Fogelsville plant is being addressed as well.

At the Kline’s Island plant in Allentown, LCA is taking steps to manually clean out the excess solids and improve treatment performance. This work is expected to begin on Saturday and continue for about two weeks. During the cleanout process, LCA expects the sewer odors to be more noticeable in some locations near the plant. The excessively hot and humid weather may make the odor issues worse.

LCA apologizes for the unpleasant sewer odors that some residents may notice in Allentown over the next two weeks while this work is being completed. The sewer odor may be described as an “earthy” or “rotten egg” smell but is not harmful to human health.

About [Lehigh County Authority](#): Lehigh County Authority (LCA) is a public water and wastewater utility committed to protecting public health and the environment by providing high-quality, safe, and reliable water and wastewater services, serving a population of approximately 200,000 people. A nonprofit, public agency, LCA was founded in 1966 by the County of Lehigh and is governed by a nine-member board of directors appointed by the County.

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