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COUNTY OF ERIE

MARK C. POLONCARZ

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

March 9, 2016

Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street – Fourth Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

**RE: Proposed Name Changes
Erie County Wastewater Treatment Plants**

Honorable Members:

Enclosed please find a resolution and an accompanying memorandum from the Department of Environment and Planning pertaining to proposed name changes for wastewater treatment plants owned by the County of Erie.

Should your Honorable Body require further information, I encourage you to contact Joseph L. Fiegl, P.E. in the Division of Sewerage Management. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.
Erie County Executive

MCP:JLF:cs

Cc: Joseph Fiegl – Deputy Commissioner, Division of Sewerage Management

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature
From: Department of Environment and Planning
Re: Proposed Name Changes
Erie County Wastewater Treatment Plants
Date: May 9, 2016

SUMMARY

Authorization to change the name of the wastewater treatment plants owned by the County of Erie to “water resource recovery facilities” is requested.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

In the wastewater industry, there has been an effort to re-brand utilities and do away with the ‘dirty’ image that has been engrained in the minds of many. The core mission of this industry is to protect public health and protect water quality by treating society’s pollution. While the waste stream utilities must manage is certainly dirty, in reality it is a clean water industry that has assisted in the restoration of waterways all over the Country. By shedding the dirty image, the hope is that the public will better value the services provided and support necessary investments in the infrastructure.

One way in which this industry is changing this perception is by renaming wastewater treatment plants as “water resource recovery facilities.” The philosophy is that fundamentally treatment plants recover a valuable resource (water) from a major societal waste stream. This is particularly important in arid/drought stricken areas where water is scarce, but it is also relevant here where Lake Erie and our other waterways are valuable community assets. The Water Environment Federation – which is an international water quality organization – now refers to wastewater treatment plants as water resource recovery facilities in all of its publications.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In January 2013, the Water Environment Federation decided to utilize the term “water resource recovery facilities” (in lieu of “wastewater treatment plants”) in all of its publications. This change represented a different approach for the clean water industry –recognizing wastewater as an asset with resources to be recovered as opposed to something that simply needs to be treated or disposed of. The Water Environment Federation’s shift to this terminology reflected a new mindset and is coupling the name change with other endeavors to help the public understand the significance of water infrastructure and the value of the services provided.

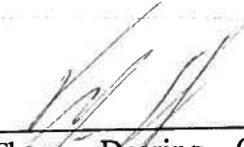
The Erie County Sewer District Boards of Managers have unanimously recommended these name changes.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

The name changes will not be further pursued.

STEPS TO FOLLOW APPROVAL

The Division of Sewerage Management will make requests to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation for formal name changes on the discharge permits for all of the County of Erie's wastewater treatment plants. Upon modification of the discharge permits, the Division of Sewerage Management will proceed with name changes on signage and in other pertinent applications.

JF  - 3/9/16

Thomas Dearing – Commissioner
Department of Environment and Planning

TD:JF:cs

Encl.

Cc: J. Fiegl – Division of Sewerage Management

**A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING**

RE: Proposed Name Changes
Erie County Wastewater Treatment Plants

WHEREAS, the core mission of wastewater treatment plants is to protect public health and water quality; and

WHEREAS, these clean water facilities recover valuable resources – specifically water – from a major societal waste stream; and

WHEREAS, in 2013 the international Water Environment Federation began referring to wastewater treatment plants as “water resource recovery facilities” in all of its publications; and

WHEREAS, the term “water resource recovery facilities” better captures the function of treatment plants and attempts to reverse the ‘dirty’ perception of the clean water industry.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that this Honorable Body hereby authorizes the Erie County Division of Sewerage Management to pursue renaming all of the County of Erie owned wastewater treatment plants as water resource recovery facilities; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Legislature be directed to send a certified copy of this resolution to the County Executive and Joseph Fiegl, P.E. – Deputy Commissioner in the Division of Sewerage Management.