

Response to Public Comments on NYSDEC's Draft SPDES Permit for the Village of Groton WWTP

1. **Comment:** Concerns have been expressed about the Department's proposed effective date for the implementation of the 0.5 mg/L phosphorus limit in the draft permit. Allowing the treatment plant 26 months after the end of construction to meet the 0.5 mg/L phosphorus limit is too long and should become effective immediately after construction.

Response: It is common in SPDES permitting to allow a facility a reasonable, finite amount of time to reach compliance with final effluent limits when construction, improved treatment, or other facility improvements are necessary to allow the facility to achieve compliance. The Department's phosphorus removal training group will be working closely with the facility to help reach compliance as quickly as possible and to operate the plant at the highest treatment technically achievable by the new facility. Upon further Department review, a revised final deadline of 14 months from end of construction for attaining the final phosphorus limit has been included in the permit.

2. **Comment:** Stream data from Dr. Halfman's 2006-2007 study indicates that soluble phosphorus becomes elevated downstream of Groton's WWTP discharge. Can the new permit include monitoring for soluble phosphorus?

Response: It is the Department's policy to limit phosphorus as total phosphorus however, effluent monitoring for soluble reactive phosphorus will be added to the draft permit from June 1 to October 31 at a sampling frequency of once per week during the 14 month period after the end of construction date. This data will be useful in helping the plant adjust its operations to meet the final permit limit. Effluent SRP monitoring 2 times per month from June 1 to October 31 will be added to the permit effective at the end of construction + 14 months. This information will help quantify SRP loading to Owasco Lake and aid in future TMDL development.

3. **Comment:** Continuous monitoring for phosphorus should be conducted by installing a 24-hour composite monitor.

Response: Phosphorus does not warrant continuous monitoring as it is a nutrient that impacts a waterbody over a longer period of time, typically during the growing season. The sample frequency table in TOGS 1.3.3 requires phosphorus sampling at least 2 times per month as a 6 hour composite for a 0.5 MGD facility. The draft permit requires more frequent sampling at once per week as a 6 hour composite.

4. **Comment:** The draft permit does not indicate that the phosphorus limits are subject to change pending a TMDL analysis.

Response: Language will be added to the draft permit stating that upon completion of a TMDL for Owasco Inlet and Owasco Lake, the Department may reopen the permit to implement any applicable phosphorus wasteload allocation.

5. **Comment:** The draft permit should not allow for the increase in daily loadings of UOD, BOD and TSS.

Response: The draft “summer” UOD limit of 40 mg/l contains both BOD and NOD components. While this represents a reduced concentration from the previous permit limit of 51.4 mg/l it does calculate to 167 lb/day vs. 150 lb/day previously. This slight increase is due to the increase in permit flow from 0.35 MGD to 0.5 MGD. The recalculated dissolved oxygen profile for the Inlet remains the same for waste assimilative capacity purposes.

The year round TSS limit has been kept at the secondary treatment level of 30/45 mg/l. This is the statutory requirement for a municipal STP and should be retained.

6. **Comment:** Year round disinfection should be required in the permit.

Response: The draft permit will be modified to include year round disinfection due to the short travel time to Class “AA” waters and the proximity to downstream water users.

7. **Comment:** The draft permit should be revised to reflect the fact that the drafting and implementation of the sewer use law will be commenced immediately following the effective date of the new permit and will be submitted to the Department for review no later than three months after the effective date.

Response: The Pretreatment Mini Schedule outlined on pages 10 and 11 of the Draft permit has been revised. The Village of Groton will have four months after the effective date of the permit to submit their draft local sewer use law.

8. **Comment:** Pretreatment standards and a permit should be issued to FLA within one year of the effective date of the new permit.

Response: The Pretreatment Mini Schedule outlined on pages 10 and 11 of the Draft permit has been revised. The Village of Groton will be required to implement the procedures proposed under the schedule within 6 months after the effective date of the permit.

9. **Comment:** The draft permit should be revised to require that the local sewer use law include provisions obligating disclosure and pretreatment of antibiotics, drugs and other chemicals that are used at FLA.

Response: The comment is noted and will be considered during the Departments review of the Town's sewer use law.

10. **Comment:** The Village of Groton should investigate I/I problems in their collection system.

Response: A report titled Inflow & Surface Water Study and Sanitary Sewer System Evaluation was prepared in January 1999. The study recommended that numerous manholes be sealed or repaired, watertight lids be installed and that an open-ended 4" lateral be capped. All of this work was completed by 2001.

11. **Comment:** DMR's should also be sent to Cayuga County DOH and the Mayor's Office of the City of Auburn.

Response: The draft permit will be revised to require that DMR's be sent to Cayuga County DOH in addition to Tompkins County DOH. The Mayor's Office of the City of Auburn can obtain copies of the DMR's from the County Health Department.

12. **Comment:** The Village of Groton requests that the date for completion of plans and specifications in the proposed schedule be extended.

Response: The compliance schedule in the draft permit will be revised to extend the date for plan and specification submittal to 3/27/2009. The start of construction and the anticipated end of construction dates will not change.

13. **Comment:** The proposed phosphorus limit of 0.5 mg/L does not appear to be based on scientific evidence.

Response: A phosphorus limit of 0.5 mg/l would provide a reasonable level of protection to Owasco Inlet and Owasco Lake as it represents best treatment technology as outlined in TOGS 1.3.6. The 0.5 mg/l limit is supported by the Owasco Inlet Macroinvertebrate study by Bode, et al 2007, and it will be in line with the limit previously established for the Moravia WWTP. An adjustment to this limit may be necessary based on a future TMDL.

14. **Comment:** There seems to be sources of phosphorus that are far more substantial than the Village of Groton WWTP therefore an investigation and complete plan to address all sources of phosphorus should be put into place. It is impossible to determine a final water quality based limit for Groton at this time.

Response: DEC's Biological Assessment Surveys in 2006 and 2007 indicated a substantial decline in water quality in Owasco Lake Inlet downstream of Groton's WWTP discharge. As a result this segment of Owasco Lake Inlet has been listed on the 303(d) list as being impaired by nutrients. A TMDL analysis will be conducted in the future to address all sources of phosphorus in the

watershed however, instream nutrient criteria need to be finalized and approved by EPA before any TMDL work can be performed.