

CLEAN WATER ACT (CWA) INSPECTION TRIP REPORT

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 5

Purpose

Wastewater Treatment Plant Compliance Evaluation Inspection Trip Report

Facility

East Chicago Sanitary District
5200 Indianapolis Boulevard
East Chicago, IN 46312

Date of Inspection

June 12, 2024

Facility Representatives

Kenneth Myers, Director of Wastewater Operations
Thomas Lentz, Operations Supervisor
Josh Diegnez, Assistant Operator
Ray Kapera, Operator
Hope Hanford, Pretreatment Coordinator
Joe Wright, Collection System Manager
Mike Flores, Maintenance
Julia Carrillo, Storm Water

Indiana Department of Environmental Management Staff

Nicholas Ream, Wastewater Inspector, (219) 730-1691, nream@idem.in.gov
Miya Spratt, Senior Environmental Manager, (219) 312-1266, mcspratt@idem.in.gov
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EPA Inspector

Newton Ellens, Pretreatment Program Manager, (312) 353-5562, ellens.newton@epa.gov

Inspector:

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SMITH

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Contents

SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION3

SECTION 2.0: BACKGROUND3

SECTION 3.0: INSPECTION ACTIVITY SUMMARY3

A. Opening Interview: 3

B. WWTP Walkthrough: 3

C. Laboratory 4

D. Staff Interviews 4

E. Closing Conference: 4

F. CSO Outfalls 4

SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION

On June 12, 2024, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) conducted a Compliance Evaluation Inspection at the East Chicago Sanitary District (ECSD) to investigate elements of the Clean Water Act at ECSD's wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) and collection system. IDEM invited the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to join the inspection.

SECTION 2.0: BACKGROUND

ECSD is a publicly-owned treatment works located in East Chicago, Indiana. IDEM issued NPDES Permit No. IN0022829 to ECSD. The effective and expiration dates of the permit are July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2026, respectively.

SECTION 3.0: INSPECTION ACTIVITY SUMMARY

A. Opening Interview:

Mr. Ellens arrived at 5200 Indianapolis Boulevard, East Chicago, Indiana 46312 at 9:00 a.m. CST, and met Ms. Spratt, Mr. Ream, and Ms. Pariso in the parking lot. The EPA and IDEM inspectors (inspection team) entered the ECSD facility and met with Kenneth Myers (Director of Wastewater Operations). Mr. Ellens presented his EPA-issued NPDES inspector credentials. Mr. Ream conducted a brief opening conference, after which Mr. Myers led the inspection team on a walkthrough of the WWTP.

B. WWTP Walkthrough:

Mr. Lentz joined the group at the start of the WWTP walkthrough. Mr. Myers showed the inspection team the following during the WWTP walkthrough:

- Oxidation ditch;
- Bar screens;
- Grit separators;
- Influent automatic sampler;
- Solids collection garage—this is where trucks haul solid waste from:
 - Grit separators and bar screens (combined) and
 - Sludge;
- Sludge press;
- Sludge holding tanks;
- Chemical feed building;
- Secondary clarifiers;
- Filter building;
- Disinfection banks (via ultraviolet light);
- Aeration basins;
- Automatic sampler for discharge;

- Outfall at the West Branch of the Grand Calumet River:¹
- Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Outfall No. 005; and
- CSO lagoon.

Afterwards, Mr. Myers temporarily left the inspection team to attend a meeting.

C. Laboratory

The inspection team and Mr. Lentz went to the ECSD laboratory. Mr. Diegnez and Mr. Kapera joined the group. While visiting the laboratory, the inspection team reviewed sampling records, laboratory records, and pH buffers.

D. Staff Interviews

The inspection team and Mr. Lentz went to a conference room. Certain ECSD staff temporarily joined the group for IDEM interviews. Specifically, IDEM interviewed the following staff:

- Ms. Hanford, regarding enforcement against Safety-Kleen Systems for pretreatment violations;
- Mr. Wright, regarding collection system and CSO overflow issues;² and
- Mr. Flores, regarding WWTP maintenance issues.

E. Closing Conference:

After the staff interviews, Mr. Ream gave ECSD staff a summary of areas of concern. He also requested ECSD to send IDEM certain records.

F. CSO Outfalls

After the closing conference, the inspection team left the ECSD WWTP and most of the ECSD staff. Ms. Carrillo, however, joined the group to lead the inspection team to CSO Outfall 002 (Indiana Harbor Ship Canal), to view its condition. Ms. Carrillo then left the group, and the inspection team then went to view the condition of CSO Outfall No. 003 (Grand Calumet River).

The inspection team concluded the ECSD inspection at 3:12 p.m. CST.

¹ At the time of the inspection, there were oil booms floating on the river's surface, immediately beyond the outfall. On January 25, 2024, IDEM requested ECSD to place oil booms in the West Bank of the Grand Calumet River, after witnessing an oil sheen in the vicinity of the ECSD outfall. During the inspection, the inspection team did not see an oil sheen in the river. However, Mr. Myers stated that ECSD continues to keep oil booms in the water as a precaution.

² Mr. Myers had re-joined the inspection team during IDEM's interview of Mr. Wright.