



Onondaga County Legislature

JAMIE McNAMARA
Clerk

TIMOTHY T. BURTIS
Chairman

TAMMY BARBER
Deputy Clerk

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE MINUTES – JUNE 17, 2025 JULIE ABBOTT, CHAIR

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Kelly, Ms. Cody, Mr. Brown

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Romeo

ALSO ATTENDING: Mr. Romeo, Chairman Burtis; also see attached list

Chair Abbott called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m., and the previous meeting's minutes were approved.

1. WATER ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION: Shannon Harty, Commissioner

a. A Resolution Calling a Public Hearing in Connection with Proposed Improvements for the Onondaga County Sanitary District (August 5, 2025 @ 12:55 p.m.)

Commissioner's Report on File with the Clerk

- All projects were included and approved with the CIP as part of the 2025 budget
- Projects have advanced through full maps and reports that are associated with each project
- Commissioner's hearing was held on June 4, 2025 and all projects have been approved by the County Executive
- Requesting authorization to schedule the public hearing

A motion was made by Ms. Cody, seconded by Dr. Kelly, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

b. Authorizing the Execution of a Consent Order Relative to the Settlement of an Enforcement Action Brought by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (\$140,000)

Purpose: *The purpose is to formalize an Order on Consent between the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Onondaga County. It addresses multiple sanitary sewer overflow (SSO) violations that occurred from the Freeman Trunk Sewer system, which discharged untreated wastewater into Onondaga Lake. The order requires Onondaga County to acknowledge the violations, pay penalties, fund an environmental project, and implement both short- and long-term corrective measures to bring the system into compliance with environmental regulations.*

Summary: *Onondaga County owns and operates the Syracuse Metropolitan Wastewater Treatment Plant and its associated sewer system. Between June 2024 and April 2025, 75,000 gallons of untreated wastewater were discharged from manholes into Onondaga Lake due to overflow events. These discharges violated the Environmental Conservation Law and specific sections of the NYCRR related to water pollution. NYSDEC has issued an Order on Consent which imposes:*

- *A civil penalty of \$100,000, of which \$10,000 is immediately payable and \$90,000 is suspended contingent on compliance.*
- *An Environmental Benefit Project (EBP) worth \$40,000 to fund watershed remediation via the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board.*
- *Implementation of Short-Term measures to mitigate SSOs*
- *Implementation of Long-Term measures to address hydraulic capacity constraints in the Freeman Ave Trunk sewer*

- *Monthly reporting obligations.*

Fiscal Impact: Immediate financial obligations:

- \$10,000 civil penalty payable upon execution of the Order
- \$40,000 Environmental Benefit Project payment to CNYRPB

Potential liabilities:

- \$90,000 suspended penalty that becomes payable if Onondaga County fails to comply with any part of the Order.

Future Obligations:

- Implementation of Short-Term measures – Cost TBD, Funded out of existing Trunk Sewer Capital Project
- Implementation of Long-Term measures – to be included in future Capital Improvement Project request

*Map of Onondaga County Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure (see Attachment No. 1)
Draft Consent Order on file with the Clerk*

- Trunk sewer is between the Village of Solvay and Onondaga Lake near West Rock
 - There is a low area where the sewer runs through the Chemtrade property
 - During extreme rain and wet weather events, the sewer backs up and overflows into an adjacent storm sewer that connects and discharges into Onondaga Lake
 - Became aware of issue in the summer of 2024 and have been working with DEC ever since to eliminate SSO
 - Due to complexities with interconnections in the adjacent Chemtrade property, there is not an easy solution
 - Public is advised under the Sewage Pollution Right to Know Act when an event happens
- Working with DEC to develop intermediate mitigation
 - Will bolt down manhole covers to stop overflow, but this will further surcharge the sewer
 - Need to implement new “pump stations” to be able to pump into the trunk sewer
 - In the long-term, need to study and look at how much bigger the sewer needs to be in order to have the correct hydraulic capacity to get to the MWTP
- Consent Order is memorializing the legal agreement and timeline between the County and DEC
- Law Department
 - “Pump Stations” refer to mini pumps called grinder pumps that pressurize the system to go into the line

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- What is the challenge with Chemtrade?
 - Right hand side of map shows the aerial setting
 - The yellow box on the right side of the map shows proximity of the area
 - South of Onondaga Lake, and south of 690
 - Left hand side of map is a zoomed in view
 - Trunk sewer (green line) flows from south to north, through Chemtrade property and along the railroad tracks
 - Capacity restriction is the area that runs along the railroad tracks near the employee parking lot
 - Blue lines are storm sewers that connect to Onondaga Lake
 - Have easements through private properties, but old industrial sites have underground utilities that make it challenging
 - Agreements with Chemtrade and Honeywell complicate the ability to get this fixed
 - Law Department
 - Honeywell owns top most designated red manhole
 - Need access agreements with 2 privately owned properties and general agreements for operation maintenance once installed

- Is it a struggle to get the required agreements?
 - All parties are willing to help resolve the issue in a timely fashion
 - It is more complicated with budgets and who will do what and when
 - Can be challenging to get everyone to the table at the same time
- Are the consent items the start of a timeline with acknowledgement that benchmarks need to be met so the County will not continue to get dinged?
 - Law Department
 - Came up with a reasonable schedule with the DEC
 - Basis of Design final report will have a schedule of compliance that will become a deliverable
 - WEP is leading the charge with reasonable time and will be checked by the DEC
 - WEP has a great record with stipulated penalties

A motion was made by Dr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Brown, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



TAMMY BARBER, Deputy Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE
DATE: JUNE 17, 2025

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
SHANNON HARRY	OCDWEP
ERIC SCHULER	OCDWEP
Dan Krantz	CE
Susan Dean	Finance
Dan Mulvihill	DMB
Gabriel Williams	DMB
Darcie Lesniak	LES
Ethan LaMontagne	Leg
John Desautels	Leg
Benedicte Owisa	Intern w/ Mrs. Hernandez
Joe Frateschi	Legal Counsel
Jim Beebe	Leg.
Isabelle Harris	CE
Cydney Johnson	CE
Nancy Lowery	Econ. Development
Ben Yaus	Law Dept.

