



## RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

**City of St Anthony**  
**Permit Number ID-002040-1**

A draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the City of St Anthony Wastewater Treatment Plant was issued for Public Notice on April 27, 2001. The original comment period was scheduled to close May 29, 2001 but was extended 15 days (to expire June 13, 2001). Public notice of this extension was mailed to interested parties and published on May 28, 2001 in a local newspaper (The Standard Journal).

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) received written comments from the permittee dated June 6, 2001. This Response To Comments document is a summary of the significant comments related to the draft NPDES permit and the EPA's responses. The Section of the permit the comment refers to is identified in parentheses at the end of the comment. The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) issued a final 401 certification dated July 23, 2001. The certification comments and conditions are included herein.

1. **Comment.** The City requests that the sampling frequency for fecal coliform be reduced to five times per month to correspond with the E. coli monitoring requirements. The lab the City currently used only accepts samples four days per week. (Section I.A1).

**401 Certification Condition.** IDEQ certifies that the fecal coliform monitoring frequency should be changed from five samples per week to five samples per month. It is improbable that the city can transport samples to the independent laboratories serving the area on the draft schedule found in the State's Water Quality Standards. These local laboratories only provide bacteria testing four days per week and are difficult to reach during the winter due to poor road conditions. In addition, the labor, testing and transportation cost of five samples per week would be a financial hardship to the City.

**Response.** The EPA established the draft fecal coliform monitoring frequency based on Idaho Water Quality Standard IDAPA 18.01.02.420(05)(a). This standard requires that the fecal coliform in sewage wastewater treatment plant effluent not exceed a geometric mean of two hundred/one hundred ml based on no more than one week's data and a minimum of five (5) samples.

However, because the state has certified that a decreased monitoring frequency of five samples per month would comply with State water quality standards, the effluent table in Section I.A of the permit has been changed to reflect this decreased frequency.

2. **Comment.** The treatment plant effluent is combined with groundwater before discharging to the drainage ditch. Therefore, any residual chlorine is diluted before discharge. Do you still want the City to monitor chlorine residual at the end of the pipe? (Section I.A.6)

**Response.** All municipal treatment plants using chlorine disinfection are required to meet a minimum of technology-based effluent limits. Effluent limits apply to the discharge after the last treatment unit and prior to combination/dilution with any groundwater. In accordance with federal regulation 40 CFR 125.3(f), technology-based limits cannot be satisfied through the use of “non-treatment” technologies such as flow augmentation (i.e., combination with groundwater) and instream mechanical aerators. In order to clarify the effluent monitoring location, Section I.A.7 of the final permit has been modified to read “The permittee must collect effluent samples from the effluent stream after the last treatment unit and prior to combination with any groundwater and discharge into the receiving waters.”

### **Conditions provided by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality in the 401 Certification**

3. **Chlorine Compliance Schedule.** The City of St Anthony should be given five years to comply with the new technology-based effluent limits for total residual chlorine. This time will allow the City to make any operational adjustments that are necessary, install a dechlorination system, and/or to monitor surface water to determine if a mixing zone could be established.

**Response.** Idaho’s water quality standards, found at IDAPA 58.01.02.400(03), only allow compliance schedules for water quality-based effluent limitations. Because the effluent limitations for total residual chlorine in the draft permit are technology-based (i.e., based on standard operating practices) they are not eligible for a compliance schedule. If non-compliance with the technology-based limits occurs, EPA would be prepared to issue an administrative order containing a reasonable compliance schedule.

4. **BOD, TSS and Bacteria Compliance Schedules.** The City of St Anthony should be given five years to comply with effluent limits for Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD), Total Suspended Solids (TSS) and bacteria (fecal coliform and E. coli). This schedule will allow the City to initiate and compile a Facility Planning Study to identify alternatives for meeting the permit limits. It will also allow the City time to make any improvements that the facility needs in order to meet the permit limits.

**Response and Changes to Permit.** Federal regulation 40 CFR 133.105 was used to develop equivalent to secondary technology-based limitations for BOD and TSS. Equivalent to secondary limits are applicable for St. Anthony’s discharge because they treat using waste stabilization lagoons. Similarly, Idaho’s water quality standards found at IDAPA 16.01.02.420.05, provide technology-based requirements for fecal coliform that have been used to develop the effluent limitations. As stated in response #3 above, compliance schedules are only permitted for water quality-based effluent limitations. Therefore, compliance schedules have not been included in the final permit for BOD, TSS and fecal

coliform.. If non-compliance with the technology-based limits occurs, EPA would be prepared to issue an administrative order containing a reasonable compliance schedule.

The NPDES permit does include new E. coli limitations that are based on the state's water quality standard, found at IDAPA 16.01.02.251(01), for the protection of primary contact recreation. Because these limitations are new and based on water quality standards, they are eligible for a compliance schedule. Therefore, Section I.A.6 of the final permit has been added that allows a five-year compliance schedule for E. coli.

5. **Ambient Monitoring.** Surface water monitoring must start 120 days from the effective date of the permit when the water is not frozen over and containing flow. IDEQ requires that the City submit a Proposed Ambient Monitoring Location Plan for review and approval 60 days prior to sampling.

**Changes to Permit.** Section I.B has been expanded to read "The permittee must conduct surface water monitoring when not frozen over and containing flow." In addition, Section I.B.1 has been expanded to read "Monitoring stations must be submitted to IDEQ for review and approval within two months of the effective date of the permit."

6. **Anti-degradation Analysis.** According to State water quality standards for discharges to Special Resource Waters, no existing point source can increase its discharge of pollutants above the design capacity of its existing wastewater treatment facility if pollutants significant to the designated beneficial uses can result in a reduction of the ambient water quality measured below the mixing zone. IDEQ considers a reduction of ambient water quality to be equivalent to a lowering of water quality as defined in IDAPA 16.01.02.002(56) of the state's water quality standards. The standards define lower water quality as "A measurable adverse change in a chemical, physical, or biological parameter of water relevant to a beneficial use, and which can be expressed numerically."

IDEQ does not consider the increase in BOD loading limits and the increase in fecal coliform limits to be a lowering of water quality. The concentration limits for BOD are the same as the previous permit. The BOD loading limits are different because they are based on a different calculation methodology. Therefore, the loading limits are not based on an allowed change in water quality and degradation is very unlikely. The fecal coliform limits have changed based on new State's water quality standards, adopted in 2000. At that time, the fecal coliform bacteria criteria was replaced with E. coli bacteria criteria consistent with EPA's guidance titled *1999 Action Plan for Beaches and Recreational Waters*. This guidance stated that fecal coliform was no longer considered reliable to protect recreational uses and that E. coli should be used instead. Therefore, IDEQ does not consider restricting wastewater discharges to meet a new E. coli standard a reduction in water quality.

**Response.** No change to the permit was necessary.

