



CITY OF BAINBRIDGE ISLAND

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City Revises Estimate of Sewage Spilled in Eagle Harbor

Bainbridge Island, WA, 06/11/09 – City officials have increased their estimate of the volume of sewage believed to have entered Eagle Harbor during last week’s spill. Following an evaluation of flow records at the city wastewater treatment plant, the estimated volume of sewage spilled has been revised from 140,000 gallons to a range of 287,000 to 493,000 gallons.

“It’s important to recognize that this new information does not alter recent assessments which show that the Harbor’s waters are now safe,” said Lance Newkirk, the City’s Deputy Director of Operations and Maintenance. “The results of water tests conducted by the Kitsap County Health District over the past two weeks show that bacteria levels meet water quality standards, and the Health District lifted their Ten Day No-Contact Advisory yesterday as originally planned.”

“It is never pleasant to provide bad news, but as a public agency, it’s crucial that we offer the public the bad as well as the good, in a prompt and accurate manner,” Newkirk said. The revised figures will be reported to all appropriate agencies, according to standard spill reporting practices, Newkirk said.

The spill, caused by a leak in a waterfront sewage line, was first detected on Saturday, May 30, 2009. City crews made temporary repairs on Sunday, May 31 which succeeded in reducing, but not stopping, the flow of sewage. Permanent repairs were completed on Tuesday, June 2.

A detailed review of daily flow records from the city’s wastewater treatment plant over the fifteen days before, during and after the spill indicates that the sewage leak may have begun two days earlier than originally believed. “The flow numbers showed lower than average readings beginning on Thursday, May 28,” Newkirk said. “Assuming that the spill did in fact begin two days earlier than previously thought, our estimate of the total volume of sewage lost into the bay needs to be increased correspondingly.”

Newkirk noted that the broad range of the spill estimate – 287,000 to 493,000 gallons -- is the result of multiple factors impacting the data. He cited ongoing construction activities at the facility, the

lack of an inflow monitoring meter (which will be installed as part of the current upgrade), changes in in-plant water reuse, in-pipe and plant storage as variables which must be factored in to the evaluation.

The city staff involved in responding to the spill are preparing for an after action meeting to discuss the City's response to the incident. Findings of the meeting, which will take place in the next two weeks, will be reported to the City Council's Public Works and Transportation Committee.

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