Town of Tappahannock
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April 24, 2012

Ms. Janine Howard
Water Permit Writer
DEQ Piedmont Regional Office
4949-A Cox Road
Glen Allen, VA 23060

Re: Town of Tappahannock WWTP (VA0071471)
Draft VPDES Permit Reissuance

Dear Ms. Howard:

Thank you for your efforts to date toward reissuance of the VPDES permit for this facility. The purpose of this letter is to provide the Town's preliminary comments on the April 10, 2012 draft permit.

Nutrient Limits

We appreciate your earlier attention and that of DEQ Central Office to the offset-related issues associated with the Watershed General Permit Registration and the 0.95 MGD flow tier. In this draft individual permit, we request DEQ's consideration of the following minor revisions with respect to the 0.95 MGD flow tier. More specifically, in accordance with 9 VAC 25-40-70.A.4 (discussed on page 8 of 19 of the draft Fact Sheet), on the effluent limitations page for the 0.95 MGD flow tier (Part I, Page 3 of 11), please revise the Total Nitrogen Calendar Year Average from 3.0 to 3.4 mg/L. This limit (3.4 mg/L) is sufficient to maintain compliance with the applicable waste load allocation of Total Nitrogen ($9{,}746 \div 0.95 \div 8.345 \div 365 = 3.4$). This approach is also consistent with other individual permits issued by DEQ addressing similar minor expansion situations.

Also, in the Fact Sheet, at Page 8 of 19, please rephrase references to "off-ramps." While the Town recognizes and agrees with the concept established by statute and regulation, we are concerned that the informal shorthand of "off-ramp" may give the public the misimpression that the facility lacks nutrient removal technology, even though the facility in fact has advanced nutrient removal technology in operation to meet stringent limits.

Bacteria Limits (Entercocci, Fecal Coliform) (Part I.A.1)

The Town requests revision and streamlining of the two bacteria limits (fecal coliform and enterococci) proposed in the draft permit.

Compliance with the enterococci limit should be adequate to prove proper disinfection. We believe that the enterococci limit is sufficient. We also believe it could serve as an adequate surrogate for evaluating consistency with the assumptions and requirements of the Upper Rappahannock Shellfish TMDL. Further, it is our understanding and belief that DEQ's Water Quality Standards program has data and information that supports this request from DEQ's rulemaking by which the enterococci and e. coli indicators were first adopted.

This request is consistent with other long-standing DEQ permitting practices, whereby one parameter from a group of two or more related parameters (e.g., NH3 and TKN) is selected (e.g., the more stringent of limits for related parameters), to provide an adequate means of evaluating permit compliance while also avoiding the waste of public resources on performing additional tests with little or no real additional value.

If DEQ determines that fecal coliform limits must remain in the permit, then conversely the enterococci limits should be removed for similar reasons with fecal coliform serving as a surrogate for enterococci, for similar reasons as stated above.

Finally, if DEQ wishes to retain both parameters, the Town would consider retaining both, but with significantly reduced monitoring for the second parameter (e.g., fecal coliform, four samples in one month per year).

Quantification Level for cBOD5

Special Condition C.9.a. (Part I, Page 7 of 11) proposes a new QL of 2 mg/L for cBOD5. The VPDES Permit Writers Manual (January 2010 Revision), lists 5 mg/L for BOD. The Fact Sheet (Page 10 of 19) indicates the change in this draft is "in accordance with recently adopted General Permit regulations." Please identify the regulation in question and whether it applies to our facility, and otherwise provide additional information about this proposed change to assist us in evaluating whether this significantly reduced QL is applicable and appropriate to this facility.

Industrial Pretreatment Program

The Fact Sheet (Page 15 of 19) identifies the reason for changes in Part I.C.13 as "language update per 8/25/11 edition of VPDES Permit Manual and PRO edits."

Please provide a copy of the "8/25/11 edition VPDES Permit Manual." The current version available to the public on the DEQ website is the January 2010 edition (Guidance N. 10-2003) at the following link visited April 24, 2012:
http://www.deq.state.va.us/Programs/Water/LawsRegulationsGuidance/Guidance/WaterPermitGuidance.aspx

Please identify the "PRO edits" and distinguish these from the provisions of the Permit Manual to assist us in evaluating the lengthy and complex pretreatment provisions of the draft permit.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact me. Thank you.

Sincerely,

G.G. Belfield, Jr.
Town Manager