



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UPDATE: Tropical Storm Helene impacting sewer service in Oconee County

SENECA, S.C. – The Oconee County Joint Regional Sewer Authority (OJRSA) continues to monitor the aftermath of the unprecedented storms that affected our region.

To all those working to restore and repair our power systems, water and sewer service, transportation network, communication systems, as well as to those taking care of the injured, sick, and our neighbors in need, we continue to offer our most sincere thanks and prayers for your safety.

As of 3:30 pm Sunday, September 29:

- The following advisories and requests shall continue to remain in place for the foreseeable future:
 - People and pets should avoid contact with all creeks and waterbodies in the area due to potential wastewater contamination or other hazards.
 - If customers observe a possible overflow of wastewater from a manhole or other vault, they should avoid the area and notify the OJRSA by calling 864-972-3900.
- The Coneross Creek Water Reclamation Facility continues to operate with no issues. There was a small electrical problem with the utility power overnight that caused some of the equipment to shut down but staff were able to quickly respond and correct it. The current treatment rate is 4,930 gallons per minute (7.1 million gallons per day), which includes the treatment of stored at the treatment plant.
- The OJRSA is storing about 4 million gallons onsite and 3 million gallons at our offsite storage tank and are releasing it into the treatment process as we are able. We hope to begin releasing flow from the offsite tank into the sewer system within the next day or two so that it can be treated and safely released into the environment.
- We are aware of only one sanitary sewer overflow (SSO) that is ongoing. The event continues to occur near our Duck Pond Pump Station and the cause continues to be that the water level in the reservoir adjacent to the station rose and submerged our manholes, which has allowed the pond water to inflow into the gravity sewer. In order to protect our downstream system, we continue to have the pumps shut off. As soon as the water level in Duck Pond Reservoir drops and we are able to inspect our system to make any necessary repairs, then we will return to normal operations at this station—we are aware that one manhole structure is damaged but staff cannot reach it because of the floodwaters.
- There are still two pump stations that do not have a generator, and the utility grid is down that serves these locations. One is the Millbrook Pump Station and the other is Pelham Creek Pump Station, both located between Seneca and Clemson. We have been informed that it may be several days before power is restored to these sites because the Duke Energy transmission system that serves the area is out of commission and it could take some time to make the necessary repairs. As a remedial measure and to ensure there are no

SSOs from these locations, we will use a pumper truck to periodically remove wastewater from the holding tanks located at these stations for treatment, which will allow for the sites to regain wastewater storage capacity for several hours until we need to repeat the process. This must continue until power is restored.

- Other than those stations mentioned above, all other pump stations either have utility power from Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative or Seneca Light & Water or they continue to utilize onsite generator power to operate the facilities. The current breakdown for power service at our critical pump and treatment facilities is:
 - Normal operations (with utility power): 6, including the treatment plant
 - On generator power and operational: 8
 - No power and not operational: 2
 - Manually turned off but ready for use once conditions improve: 1
- We have some concern regarding the availability of diesel fuel for our generators. Maintenance staff believe that we will be able to get through Monday morning before the supply depletes at many of the stations. If necessary, we can safely shuttle 100 gallons or so at a time to the stations that are in need, but this will only buy us a little time until either a bulk delivery can be made by a supplier or the utility circuit serving these sites can be repaired.
- Repairs will be made to the remote monitoring equipment at the two pump stations that do not have power or a generator.

About the Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority:

The Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority (OJRSA) is a governmental agency providing wastewater treatment service to the cities of Seneca, Walhalla, Westminster, the town of West Union and their surrounding areas. Learn more at www.ojrsa.org.

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