

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lehigh County Municipalities to Learn Details of Regional Sewer Plan

Projects envisioned for the next decade will require approximately \$600 million to address environmental challenges and meet current and future sewer service needs.

Allentown, PA – Beginning today, Lehigh County Authority (LCA) will be visiting officials in 15 municipalities in Lehigh County to discuss the future of sewer service in the region. These municipalities are interconnected through a decades-old network of nearly 1,000 miles of underground pipes that send the communities' wastewater to the Kline's Island Wastewater Treatment Plant in Allentown. Collectively, the system is referred to locally as the Kline's Island Sewer System.

Since 2007, federal and state regulators have been coordinating with the municipalities to develop solutions for the region's aging sewer infrastructure and dwindling system capacity that is needed to support economic growth. This lengthy planning process may be coming to a conclusion soon, and LCA is facilitating conversations with all municipalities about the projects that will be needed to address these system challenges. At its core, the plan will be focused on alleviating sanitary sewer overflows that occur during rain events and ensuring that both current and future citizens have access to reliable sewer service for the foreseeable future.

Solutions to address these sewer system challenges will be complex and expensive, with current cost estimates totaling approximately \$600 million over the next decade. To help shape the plan details, LCA will be seeking public input, which will start with meeting with each municipality involved in the program.

The municipalities connected to the Kline's Island Sewer System are:

City of Allentown
Borough of Emmaus
Borough of Macungie
Borough of Alburtis
Borough of Coplay*
Upper Macungie Township
Lower Macungie Township
South Whitehall Township
Salisbury Township
Whitehall Township*

Upper Milford Township
Hanover Township
North Whitehall Township*
Weisenberg Township
Lowhill Township

** The Borough of Coplay, Whitehall Township and North Whitehall Township receive sewer service through an agreement with the Coplay-Whitehall Sewer Authority.*

The sewage facilities plan, called an Act 537 Plan, is required by the Pa. Department of Environmental Protection due to the long-standing environmental and sewer capacity challenges in the region. Details of the plan are still under development, but LCA wants every municipality in the Kline's Island Sewer System to be involved in the planning process.

In the municipal meetings scheduled over the next month, LCA will review details about the Kline's Island Sewer System and the project concepts that are being developed. A more detailed financial analysis and review of sewer rates to support the plan will be presented in early 2024. A series of public input meetings will be held next year as well to ensure citizens can weigh in and learn more before the plan is finalized.

As the plan details are developed, information will be posted on a dedicated website, lehighcountysewer.org, along with opportunities for public input.

Upcoming municipal meetings that LCA is scheduled to attend are listed below, with other municipal meetings to be scheduled in December.

South Whitehall Township	11/8/2023	6 p.m.
Hanover Township	11/15/2023	6 p.m.
Coplay-Whitehall Sewer Authority	11/16/2023	7 p.m.
Borough of Emmaus	11/20/2023	6 p.m.
Salisbury Township	11/21/2023	7 p.m.
Lower Macungie Township	11/27/2023	6 p.m.
Borough of Alburtis	11/29/2023	7 p.m.
Borough of Macungie	12/4/2023	7:30 p.m.
Upper Macungie Township	12/7/2023	7 p.m.

LCA is facilitating this effort as the regional municipal agency charged with providing service to all 15 municipalities. While LCA operates regional components of the Kline's Island Sewer System – large sewer interceptors, pump stations and treatment facilities – each municipality is responsible for maintaining their own sewer lines.

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About Lehigh County Authority: Lehigh County Authority (LCA) is a public water and wastewater utility committed to protecting public health and the environment by providing high-quality, safe, and reliable water and wastewater services, serving a population of approximately 270,000 people. A nonprofit, public agency, LCA was founded in 1966 by the County of Lehigh and is governed by a nine-member board of directors appointed by the County.

Get to Know Kline's Island Sewer System



Kline's Island Sewer System is the regional wastewater system that serves 15 communities in Lehigh County. The system includes nearly 1,000 miles of pipes and large sewer lines that carry sewage from each municipal system to the treatment plant in Allentown, where it is treated to the highest possible environmental standards and discharged to the Lehigh River. About 270,000 people rely on the system to treat 32 million gallons of wastewater daily.



OUR SEWER SYSTEM IS AGING

Some parts of our sewer system are 100 years old. As the system's pipes deteriorate with age, they're also operating at maximum capacity, making the problem worse. During storms, rainwater can flow into the system, resulting in raw sewage overflowing from manholes, backing up into basements, and entering local waterways.

We're working on a regional solution that will upgrade, rehabilitate, and expand our sewer system to meet the needs of residents and businesses for decades to come.

A REGIONAL SEWER PLAN TO ADDRESS OUR AGING SYSTEM

Since the 1960s, the 15 municipalities have collaborated to build sewer infrastructure to meet the region's needs. Now, we are creating a plan to address the major system upgrades needed. This is a critical plan for every community in the region—it's the largest investment our region has ever made to protect public health and the environment.

The plan's critical elements include rehabilitating municipal sewers, expanding system capacity, understanding how the solution will affect sewer rates, and identifying sources of funding.

For the plan to move forward, every municipality must approve the plan in early 2025, so we're seeking input to ensure the plan addresses each community's needs and the region's public health and environmental concerns.

OUR REGION'S SEWER SYSTEMS SERVES

1. City of Allentown
2. Borough of Emmaus
3. Borough of Macungie
4. Borough of Alburtis
5. Borough of Coplay
6. Upper Macungie Township
7. Lower Macungie Township
8. South Whitehall Township



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

 lehighcountysewer.org

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KLINE'S ISLAND SEWER SYSTEM PLAN QUICK FACTS



The Kline's Island Sewer System plan is being developed to meet the comprehensive regulations included in the Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act, also called an "Act 537 Plan." The plan requires approval from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).



The Act 537 Plan for the Kline's Island Sewer System will address sewer overflows and ensure the system meets strict environmental laws and regulations.



All municipalities in the Kline's Island Sewer System will be part of the solution. Municipal officials in each community will vote on the plan in early 2025.



The plan's total costs are estimated to be \$600 million.



To accomplish this major investment and protect the health and safety of our communities, sewer rates will need to increase. More information about rate impacts will be available in early 2024.



To minimize impacts to residents and businesses, we will aggressively pursue all available state and federal funding sources to help pay for the projects included in the Kline's Island Sewer System plan.



KLINE'S ISLAND SEWER SYSTEM REGIONAL PLAN TIMELINE

2019-2022

Initial Planning Phase

Engineering, flow modeling, municipal growth projections

2023

Develop Solutions

Project concepts created with cost estimates and municipal input

Begin seeking input from elected officials and the community

2024

Refine Plan with Public Input

Evaluate financial impacts and sewer rate projections

Incorporate public input into final plan documents

2025

Municipal and DEP Approval Process

15 municipalities approve plan and intermunicipal agreements

Submit Regional Act 537 Plan to DEP by March 2025

2026-2035

Implement the Regional Sewer Plan

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:



lehighcountysewer.org

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