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City Opens Public Comment on Chesapeake Bay TMDL Action Plan

Harrisonburg, Va. – Harrisonburg’s Public Works Department is tasked with managing the city’s Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) general permit, which is issued by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

This permit requires the development and implementation of a Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) action plan for cleaning up the bay. The action plan identifies strategies to reduce nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment pollution by five percent (5%) before July 1, 2018 to comply with federal standards. Once that reduction is met, the city is required to reduce pollutants by another 35 percent (35%) over the course of the next 10 years and another reduction of 65 percent (65%) over the next 15 years. This ultimately results in a 100 percent (100%) reduction of pollutants flowing into our local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay.

What is a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System or MS4?

The city’s storm sewer system is completely separate from the sanitary sewer system. The sanitary sewage flows through sanitary sewer pipes to the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Regional Sewer Authority, which is a waste water treatment plant, located in Mt. Crawford. The stormwater drains untreated directly into local surface waters like Blacks Run. The storm water travels over a variety of surfaces on its way to streams, lakes and rivers.

What is the problem with stormwater runoff?

Each time it rains, the resulting runoff of stormwater picks up debris, litter, pesticides, chemicals, motor oil and sediment as it flows across rooftops, lawns, streets, and parking lots. A common misconception is that water running off streets and into storm drains goes to a treatment plant. It does not. In fact, stormwater receives no treatment and drains directly into our local waterways.

MORE

PRESS RELEASE: CITY OPENS PUBLIC COMMENTS ON MS4 PERMIT PROGRAM
PAGE 2

The city wants to continue educating the public and receiving feedback regarding the draft Chesapeake Bay TMDL action plan. Comments are accepted through www.BeHeardHarrisonburg.org; by email to Kelley.Junco@HarrisonburgVA.gov; or by mail to Kelley Junco, 320 E. Mosby Road. **The public comment period is open until July 22.**

To review more information about the MS4 Permit Program or to review the Chesapeake Bay TMDL action plan, visit www.HarrisonburgVA.gov/MS4-permit-program.

To subscribe to receive email notifications about volunteer opportunities, workshops, public meetings and other related stormwater and environmental events sponsored by the city, visit www.HarrisonburgVA.gov/notify-me.

*Who will notify you if an emergency-related event is happening in Harrisonburg or Rockingham County? Sign up to receive free alerts through the **Harrisonburg and Rockingham County Emergency Alert System** by visiting www.HREmergencyAlert.com.*



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