



PRESS RELEASE

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Gunpowder RIVERKEEPER® protects sensitive species and drinking water for Baltimore Metro area residents by ending litigation and reaching a Settlement with Carroll County's Hampstead Wastewater Treatment Plant and Maryland Department of the Environment. The settlement assures improvements in Water Quality in local trout streams upstream of Loch Raven Reservoir by increasing Water Quality Monitoring and improving Public Notice of Wastewater Permit renewals statewide.

Hampstead, Maryland – on May 8, 2018 after two years of advocacy work to protect water quality downstream of the Hampstead Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Gunpowder RIVERKEEPER® represented by the Environmental Action Center (EAC) finalized an agreement with the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and the County Commissioners of Carroll County, Maryland concerning the renewal of a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (“NPDES”) water pollution discharge permit (“Permit”) for the Hampstead Wastewater Treatment Plant. The County was seeking MDE approval of the renewed Permit. GRK objected to MDE’s approval of the Permit on public notice and environmental grounds and was forced to challenge the permit in Carroll County Circuit Court.

The settlement withdrew the permit challenge and the County agreed to:

- An acceleration of the timeline for the facility’s upgrade to important Enhance Nutrient Removal (ENR) technology.
- The commitment of funding to Gunpowder RIVERKEEPER® for water quality monitoring projects that will protect the Gunpowder River watershed.

Additionally, MDE agreed to:

- Undergo key programmatic changes by adding a compliance history section to all Fact Sheets for reissued municipal wastewater discharge permits statewide.
- Prioritize stream sampling upstream and downstream from the facility's discharge.
- Add an Antidegradation discussion section to all Fact Sheets for reissued municipal wastewater discharge permits statewide explaining discharge's potential to impact any identified Tier II stream segments and if these impacts were analyzed.

Patrick DeArme, staff attorney, Environmental Action Center said: "The Gunpowder River is one of the most important watersheds in Maryland, providing drinking water to almost two million people in the Baltimore-Metro area. Threats to the quality of this water must be taken seriously, and permitting decisions should be made with the utmost care to ensure that this vitally important watershed is protected. This agreement shows that MDE and the County are willing to take steps to ensure the quality of the Gunpowder River watershed is protected. It also shows that MDE is committed to enhancing and improving their public notice procedures for future permitting decisions."

Theaux Le Gardeur, executive director and Riverkeeper, Gunpowder RIVERKEEPER® said: "The settlement assures that MDE is committed to more transparency in letting downstream residents know if these wastewater treatment plants are following state and federal laws. These changes ensure that meaningful and robust public participation in the wastewater permit renewals will take place. According to the Chesapeake Bay program, the region is home to 472 Municipal and Industrial wastewater treatment plants. Wastewater contributes to one third of the nitrogen and phosphorous in the Chesapeake Bay. The communities that live downstream of these discharges are the most adversely impacted by them and will know have more information to ask for cleaner and safer water to drink, fish and swim in."

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The **Environmental Action Center** (www.environmentalactioncenter.org) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting and improving natural areas and building healthier communities by ensuring that sources of air and water pollution comply with local, state and federal regulations. Please visit EAC's website and Facebook page for more information on our work and how you can support EAC.

The **Gunpowder RIVERKEEPER®** (www.gunpowderriverkeeper.org) is a grassroots, advocacy based membership organization charged with protecting, conserving and restoring the Gunpowder River and its Watershed. Gunpowder Riverkeeper works to strengthen ties within the communities that benefit from this vital water resource by engaging in outreach activities, which have an inherent stewardship message that transcends economic, social and educational boundaries. Please visit GRK's website and Facebook page for more information on our work and how you can support GRK.