

City of Lowell, Massachusetts Agreement to Address Merrimack River Pollution

Background

Parts of Lowell’s sewer system combine sewage and stormwater in a single pipe. Such sewer systems are known as combined sewer systems. To prevent sewage from backing up into homes during wet weather, such as heavy rain, some combined sewer systems are designed to overflow into nearby rivers. Parts of Lowell’s sewer system are designed to overflow into the Merrimack River.

Sewage overflowing into the Merrimack River pollutes the river with bacteria and other substances that are harmful to people, pets, and wildlife. The Merrimack River continues to be a source of drinking water that must be protected.

The Clean Water Act requires Lowell to ensure that sewage does not prevent the Merrimack River from being used for recreation and as a drinking water source.

What’s in the settlement?

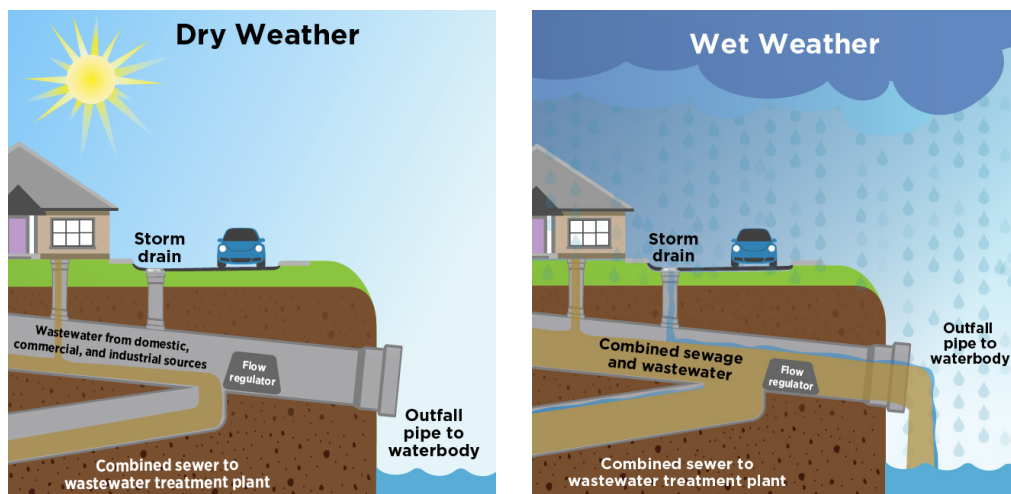
The City of Lowell has agreed to control sewage overflowing into the Merrimack River by:

- building new sewer pipes to further separate sewage from stormwater and reduce sewage overflow;
- improving its system for detecting sewage and other pollutants at its stormwater outfalls; and
- creating new laws stopping hazardous stormwater runoff from construction sites, among other things.

The City of Lowell has paid a \$200,000 fine for violating the Clean Water Act.



A view of Lowell’s Eastern Canal that flows into the Merrimack River.



Combined Sewer System

For more information



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