

Statement from L.A. Hyperion Wastewater Treatment Plant (Issued on July 19, 2021): Summary of Hyperion Flooding on July 11, 2021

The hard working and dedicated frontline staff of LA Sanitation and Environment consider themselves guardians of the Santa Monica Bay and Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant as their home. Just as they have done during rain or shine, 24 hours per day, 365 days per year, and even through a major pandemic, they put up a valiant struggle to save Hyperion and the Santa Monica Bay. Their heroic efforts averted a much larger catastrophe and limited the discharge of untreated wastewater to 17 million gallons, which is a small fraction of the 260 million gallons per day that could have polluted Santa Monica Bay for days on end.

On the afternoon of Sunday July 11, 2021, the Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant became inundated with overwhelming quantities of debris, causing backup of the headworks facilities. The plant's relief system was triggered, and wastewater overflows were controlled through use of the plant's one-mile outfall system at 7 pm which resulted in the discharge of untreated wastewater into Santa Monica Bay. Normally the discharge of secondary-treated effluent is through the five-mile outfall. During the over eight hours of discharge through the one-mile outfall, approximately 17 million gallons of wastewater (representing six percent of an average daily load) was discharged as an emergency measure to prevent the plant from going completely offline and discharging much more untreated wastewater.

Per established protocols, the State of California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) and the National Response Center were notified respectively at 8:10 pm and at 8:18 pm on July 11th. State Law requires that an unauthorized discharge of sewage [as defined in 23 California Code of Regulations (CCR) 2250 (b)] into or onto state waters must be reported to Cal OES. Cal OES will then immediately notify the appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board, the local public health department, and the local office of environmental health. These offices are responsible for determining appropriate public and environmental safety measures.

Water quality sampling and testing of shoreline (beach) samples was conducted, and our monitoring vessel traveled to both outfalls to make observations and take samples for analyses following regulatory permit protocols. Five days of testing revealed normal bacteria levels.

The almost catastrophic flooding of the Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant on July 11, 2021 resulted in significant areas of the plant under water and major damage to equipment and processes to treat and clean wastewater.

City forces and contractors are working around the clock to pump wastewater out of inundated facilities, sanitize them, and mitigate the hazardous conditions inside the facilities caused by the flooding. It is expected to take a month or more to repair damaged facilities and equipment in order to restore full functionality to Hyperion.

We ask for your patience during the reconstruction period as you may experience intermittent odors, noise, or see smoke or flames emitting from plant equipment permitted by AQMD to combust unutilized digester gas (a renewable energy byproduct of wastewater, that is used to generate power for plant operations).

Hyperion is taking all measures to minimize and mitigate impacts (odors, noise, etc.) to the community during the cleanup and repairs to fully restore the functionality of the plant.