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## INFORMATION:

### **CMUD Biosolids Land Application Permit Renewal Update**

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Staff transmits this information as an update to Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities Department's permit for disposal of wastewater biosolids in South Carolina. This item addresses issues covered in an article posted online today by *The Charlotte Observer*.

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environment Control (DHEC) is in the process of renewing CMUD's permits to dispose of wastewater biosolids. While DHEC has recently issued the permit renewal, an appeal period was open through June 18. Outside parties have filed appeals (referred to as "Requests for Review") to the DHEC Board. This week, CMUD sent a letter to the Clerk of the Board of DHEC as a part of that process requesting clarification to terminology in the draft permit.

The South Carolina DHEC staff began a process to renew the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utility Department land application permit in January. The permit, which had previously been issued in 2001, allows CMUD to apply recycled biosolids by providing the material to farmers as a soil amendment to augment commercial fertilizer produces. "Biosolids" is the term for highly treated solid material that is one of the products of wastewater treatment. Biosolids from Charlotte's wastewater plants are spread on about 4,000 acres each year in North and South Carolina.

At least two parties, including the Catawba Riverkeeper, have filed Requests for Review. Those parties contend that DHEC failed to properly consider information about impacts of land application and/or that DHEC made improper decisions leading up to the permit renewal.

DHEC's Board decides if it will consider the Requests for Review and schedules a final review conference. If the Board declines or does not hold a final review conference within 60 calendar days after receipt of the Request for Review, the draft permit becomes final. If the Board decides to hold a final review conference, the parties will receive notice at least ten days before the conference. Parties may appeal a decision of the Board to the Administrative Law Court in South Carolina.

Stringent regulations developed by the U.S. EPA and enforced by the states of North and South Carolina govern the program. The regulations monitor content of the biosolids including elements such as heavy metals, phosphorus and nitrogen. They also prescribe how often each farm field can receive the product, set buffers for streams and water sources, and prohibit the use of biosolids on land used to grow food for human consumption.

Biosolids can be landfilled when they don't meet required quality standards or for other reasons – for example, when land application equipment can't operate because farm fields are

too wet due to rainy weather. Landfilling is not as desirable because the benefits of land application are lost and because landfilling costs ratepayers three times as much as land application. In all, the biosolids program is approximately one percent of CMUD's entire budget.

CMUD biosolids program holds an internationally based certification that assures that the program's processes and procedures are documented and consistently followed. CMUD's program is audited, both internally and by outside, third party auditors to ensure compliance with the certification's requirements. The last third-party audit, conducted in January 2013, found no issues.

**City Source Tells Stories of Citizen Service**

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*City Source* is the City of Charlotte's unique 30-minute program for citizens to learn about the City's services as well as how its employees serve the community. The program airs the first and third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. on Cable 16 (Time Warner Cable), AT&T U-verse and is streamed LIVE online at [www.charlottenc.gov](http://www.charlottenc.gov).

In the June 20 – July 3 edition viewers can see how police in uptown handle crowds, traffic, night life and more. Viewers will also learn what it's like to be a foster parent at Animal Care & Control, find out about firefighter Jeff Reid's good news, learn how they can score with recycling, and make sure the Queen City stays "Tree-mendous."

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