

August 14, 2024

Emily Schnick
Environmental Consultant
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
520 Lafayette Rd N
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Ms. Schnick,

I am writing to provide a response on behalf of the City of Cottage Grove to the request for public comment on the draft wastewater permit for the 3M Chemical Operations Facility in Cottage Grove.

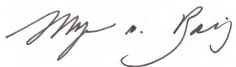
Our understanding is the existing NPDES permit expired in January 2008 and is just now being renewed. The extended period between permit expiration and renewal is unacceptable. This gap in permitting makes city staff and residents weary of language regarding current technological limitations included in the draft permit. Any response to this concern involving the addressment of technological improvements as part of future permit(s) is unacceptable to the City of Cottage Grove. Additionally, the MPCA needs to be held accountable for timely reviewing and reissuing both current and future NPDES permits.

Due to the sensitive nature of the effluent limitations included in this permit, the City of Cottage Grove requires additional transparency of effluent limitations, reporting requirements, and enforcement actions required by, and taken against, the permittee. All reporting requirements and testing results included in the final permit need to be publicly available for the duration of the permit period.

In addition to the items mentioned above, Cottage Grove city staff have assembled a list of comments included below in Attachment 1.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me regarding this issue.

Sincerely,



City of Cottage Grove
Myron Bailey - Mayor

Attachment #1

Relevant Permit Section	Item/Question to be Addressed
General	How can city staff and residents be assured that the draft NPDES permit will be reviewed in a timely manner upon expiration? The current gap in permitting review makes the City of Cottage Grove weary of language regarding current technological limitations included in the draft permit. Any response to this item involving the addressment of improved testing technology as part of a future permit is unacceptable to the City of Cottage Grove.
General	The City of Cottage Grove requests additional transparency of effluent limitations, reporting requirements, and enforcement actions required by, and taken against, the permittee.
General	All reporting requirements and testing results included in, and required by, the final permit need to be publicly available for the duration of the permit's governance.
Permitted Facility Description	Has any historical PFAS testing been performed on sludge produced by the Phase 1 and 2 treatment trains prior to disposal in the non-hazardous waste landfill?
5.64.2	Item 1: Why is emergency bypass allowed rather than contaminated groundwater being directed to the headworks of the existing and future treatment system?
5.64.2	Item 2: Is water bypassed from the normal SD 002 discharge location still receiving the same level of treatment in the described configuration?
5.68.55	Is the permittee on schedule to meet these deadlines?
5.68.62	It is requested that local stakeholders be notified if this process occurs.
5.69.76	If testing technology improves before the permit cycle ends, will the MPCA require the use of the more stringent testing method?
5.69.76	Regarding the statement "Note - Due to the variable stormwater characteristics, stormwater SD and WS stations may use all results from all stormwater stations when assessing compliance with the 4 ng/L reporting limit." What does this statement mean, and how will it be calculated? It is requested that an average based on flow measured on at least one storm event. Additionally, it is requested results from all other stormwater SD and WS stations be separated from the main SD 002 discharge when determining compliance.
5.69.76	Regarding the statement "Note - Non-targeted PFAS analysis shall be conducted at a minimum frequency of once every five years of the water required to be monitored at all locations in this permit...". It is recommended that a Non-targeted PFAS analysis be required within one year of permit issuance.
5.69.80	If a method other than flow based average is used when determining compliance of the SD and WS stormwater stations: It is requested that if some values are less than the reporting limit, substitute 1/2 of the reporting limit rather than 0 to report the averaged concentration.

Relevant Permit Section	Item/Question to be Addressed
SD 001 - PFNA Monitoring	Why is PFNA not regulated in the same way as other PFAS chemicals noted in the permit? PFNA is also included in drinking water limits.
SD 001 - PFNA Monitoring	If limits are not provided for PFNA in the issued permit, it is requested the monitoring frequency be raised from 1x/month to 1x/week.
SD 002 - PFNA Monitoring	Why is PFNA not regulated in the same way as other PFAS chemicals noted in the permit? PFNA is also included in drinking water limits.
SD 002 - PFNA Monitoring	If limits are not provided for PFNA in the issued permit, it is requested the monitoring frequency be raised from 1x/month to 1x/week.