



New FOG Ordinance Needs DeKalb BOC Action

FOG (fats, oils, and grease) is the main cause of sanitary sewer spills in DeKalb County. These spills have huge negative impacts on the county's streams and rivers. They also cost ratepayers hundreds of thousands of dollars each year in repair and cleanup costs. A much needed new FOG ordinance has been developed and awaits review and action by the Board of Commissioners (BOC).



Sanitary sewage pool on bank of Snapfinger Creek after spill (photo by Jackie Echols)

DeKalb County urgently needs a tougher ordinance to deal with FOG (fats, oils, and grease). The severity of the county's FOG problem and related sanitary sewer spills crisis confirms this. More than forty-percent of DeKalb County residents live in apartments and thousands of restaurants are spread throughout the county. These apartment complexes and restaurants create huge amounts of FOG, making their help to resolve this problem absolutely crucial.

The proposed new ordinance must focus on FOG prevention where apartment and restaurant owners take an active role in ensuring that their tenants and employees correctly dispose of these substances. It must include stronger incentives to stop FOG induced sewage backups by holding business owners more accountable for what goes down their drains. Restaurants that continue to be the focus of enforcement actions and apartment "hot spots" - locations where FOG induced spills occur over and over again - must become more hands-on by identifying and implementing solutions.

Additionally, the new ordinance must hold businesses accountable by ensuring that they pay their fair share of costs related to sewer pipe repairs and environmental cleanups when spills occur and a response by the county is necessary. Currently, these costs are passed on to all ratepayers, which eliminates the incentive for these businesses to fix problems.

DeKalb County's existing FOG ordinance is inadequate to deal with the current sanitary sewer spill crisis gripping the county. Every week thousands of gallons of sewage are dumped into the county's creeks and ratepayers pay hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to deal with broken sewer pipes and the mess left behind on sidewalks, streets, and stream banks.

These costly repairs and cleanups demand that everyone must do their share to solve the county's FOG and sanitary sewer spill crisis. Without clear and effective incentives aimed at prevention, the county's FOG problem will continue unabated and efforts to eliminate dangerous sanitary sewer spills will remain stalled.

Once FOG gets into sewer pipes the damage is done. It is only a matter of time before pipes become clogged, break, and sewage spills into streams. The county needs an ordinance that focuses on keeping FOG out of the sewer system and sewage out of our streams.

Your help is needed to urge the Board of Commissioners to review and to pass the proposed FOG ordinance. Let them know that you support this legislation, which will save ratepayers money and protect the environment.

Don't wait! Call and/or email your Commissioner today and ask that immediate action be taken to review and pass the proposed new FOG ordinance. [Click here](#) for BOC contact information.

Thank you.

South River Watershed Alliance

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