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Hamilton County Commissioners to Hold Hearing to Require MSD to Follow Modeling Standards after \$100 Million Waste Discovered

CINCINNATI – The Hamilton County Board of Commissioners scheduled a public hearing to consider an Administrative Rule directing the Metropolitan Sewer District to comply with its current modeling standards. The public hearing will occur on Wednesday, February 17 at 11:30 a.m. in room 603 of the County Administration Building, 138 East Court Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202. MSD ratepayers are encouraged to present testimony on the pending rule.

The modeling standards were developed by MSD based on the generally accepted waste water industry hydraulic modeling standards. The hydraulic model is used to define the pipe sizes for sewer projects. A review by the County Monitor found the sewer district, by ignoring their own hydraulic modeling standards, has and will either oversize or undersize projects, and unnecessarily delay consent decree compliance. This will result in waste of \$100 million in ratepayer funds because MSD frequently ignores its own modeling standards in building sewer projects, resulting in significant over or under sized projects.

Modeling is performed to accurately size, design, and build construction projects. Inaccurate modeling is the single largest risk to ratepayer dollars and Consent Decree compliance. With more than \$2 billion of Consent Decree projects to be designed and built; only 2% of area modeled by MSD was done to the accuracy required by its current standards. This means that projects in the remaining 98% of the MSD service area are subject to inappropriate sizing. The County Monitor has determined MSD will spend more than \$100 million to address these modeling related problems.

As the owner of the sewer district, the county is taking steps to require MSD to follow its own modeling standards and, where MSD standards fail to address a situation, to follow widely recognized industry standards. This will result in more timely and appropriately sized projects.

“It’s discouraging to learn that MSD opposes a rule that would only help to deliver projects on time and to save ratepayer dollars and ensure that projects are neither overbuilt nor underbuilt,” said Commission President Chris Monzel. “Overbuilt projects mean ratepayer dollars are spent where they were not needed. Underbuilt means that completed projects have to be built again. Both waste public funds.”

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