

310 Maple Avenue • Box 247
Phone: (479) 752-3912

Gavin Grey
Division of Environmental Quality
5301 Northshore Drive
North Little Rock AR

RE: Decatur Weather Issues. Permit# AR0022292 AFIN# 04-00052

Dear Mr. Gray,

I am following up from a phone conversation I had with you concerning our wastewater treatment plant issues during two events that effected our plant operations.

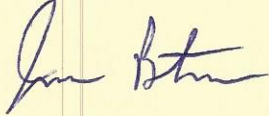
First was a thunderstorm with a lot of lightning on January 31 2021. This event did not cause a shutdown of the plant, but it damaged electrical systems throughout the plant. It knocked out communication boards, a couple of VFD's, ethernet connection cards and so on. Some of these parts we are not normal spare parts most plants would keep, and the lead time on these parts have been long in some cases. I mention this issue, even though we continued to treat water, to show how this compounded the next weather issue.

On February 11th, the coldest night of the "big freeze" we all know about, around 4 am, our influent lift station that feeds our plant failed to restart after a low water level shut off. I think it was a perfect storm. I believe the station shut off, the air was very moist for the -11 to -15 degrees, a contactor in the electric panel iced over, and when the pump was called for the contactor would not close because of ice. When we tried to open the panel up to see what was wrong, just the vibration of trying to open the door caused the pumps to start. The problems during the 2-hour shut down however were extensive. Our rotary drum screens froze, almost any pipe that had moving water in it that was above the plant water level froze very quickly. The amount of heat we needed to unthaw pipes just was not available to us for a couple of days. We did divert to our storage pond quickly, the processing plant that sends us 60% of our flow was not running and did not until our plant was operational about 5 days later. We were able to store water until a few hours before the plant was operational to us again. Our influent lift station overflowed and water naturally, for the most part flowed to another pond south of the plant and was contained. Some water, probably 50,000 gallons did reach the receiving stream. But as I told you it had passed through our influent screens and had been aerated in our pond for a while, so not completely untreated.

We are running, in compliance this week so far, I will have some compliance issues with the second half of February, and some days that we were not able to sample, mostly on days we had no flow. We have a lot of grounds clean up from the overflowing water, as soon as we can get the plant operating efficiently, and the grounds dry up more.

We are determined to get our plant back to 100%. And fix weaknesses we had during these events. If you have any questions or concerns please give me a call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim Boston". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jim" and last name "Boston" clearly distinguishable.

James Boston
Public Works Manager
City of Decatur