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For Immediate Release

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## **BRISTOL TOWNSHIP SETTLES CLEAN WATER ACT VIOLATIONS**

PHILADELPHIA – Bristol Township agreed today to resolve allegations by the United States and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that the township violated federal and state water pollution control laws and regulations at its water treatment works in Bucks County, announced United States Attorney Zane David Memeger. As part of the settlement, the township agreed to pay a civil penalty of \$226,000 for the violations that have already occurred. The consent decree provides for stipulated penalties to accrue in the coming months if violations of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit continue. Both the civil penalty and the stipulated penalties are divided evenly between the United States and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The settlement resolves several different alleged violations, by the township, of the federal Clean Water Act and/or Pennsylvania's Clean Streams Law, including:

- A system failure on December 30, 2006 that led to discharge of effluents into the Neshaminy Creek;
- A pump system overload on April 17-18, 2007, that led to a leak of 50 gallons per minute of sewage onto a private driveway and public roadway in Croydon, Pennsylvania;
- An alarm and pump system failure on July 20, 2007 that resulted in sewage escaping from a manhole onto a public roadway;
- At least nine additional overflows of wastewater and/or sewage;
- Repeated and diverse maintenance violations resulting in the failure of various system parts, including parts necessary to monitor sewage flow, influent and effluent volumes, and water quality; and
- Chronic, intentional processing of wastewater volumes far in excess of the treatment works' permitted capacity.

As part of the settlement, Bristol Township has agreed to the terms of a consent decree that has been lodged with the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania for public comment. That consent decree requires that the township take numerous steps to improve the state and management of its treatment works. In addition to numerous enhanced planning requirements, the consent decree requires the township to develop and install a greatly enhanced Information Management System, including: a more accurate geographic information system to map the treatment works components; a maintenance management system to oversee preventive, responsive, and emergency maintenance; and a supervisory control and data acquisition system to monitor performance and immediately alert the township to any alarms or other concerns. The consent decree also requires Bristol Township to increase its staffing and change the management of any new connections that it seeks to add.

“The obligations of the Clean Water Act protect us all,” Memeger said. “The permit system exists to make certain that the citizens of this district know that when they turn on their taps, the water that they are drinking is safe, and when they walk beside a creek or swim in a river, that water is clean. No one should have to fear that sewage will overflow onto public streets or into public streams. Today’s settlement represents a step forward in Bristol Township’s efforts to comply with its obligations to protect its residents.”

The Bristol Township treatment works were the subject of a previous criminal prosecution. Former Director of Public Works Steven McClain and former plant operator Ronald Meinzer pleaded guilty in 2006 to a criminal information charging them with knowingly discharging thousands of gallons of untreated sewage into the Delaware River and tampering with samples and monitoring equipment at the treatment plant.

The proposed consent decree is subject to a 30 day public comment period and final court approval. It is available for public viewing on the Eastern District’s website.

The case was handled by Assistant United States Attorney Paul W. Kaufman, Senior Attorney Nancy Flickinger of the United States Department of Justice Environmental and Natural Resources Division, and Pamela Lazos, the Senior Assistant Regional Counsel for the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Assistant Counsel William H. Gelles handled the case on behalf of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. The matter was investigated by EPA Region III Water Protection Division and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

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