



CITY OF HOLLISTER PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

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A Statement from the City of Hollister Public Works Department

The City of Hollister has worked to ensure our Water Reclamation Plant serves our growing community while protecting the local environment. However, we acknowledge that recent odor issues have created discomfort for residents living near the facility, particularly on the West Side. We want to explain what is happening, how we are addressing it, and what you can expect in the coming weeks.

What Happened

Wastewater treatment is a biological process that relies on oxygen to help 'good' bacteria break down waste. The facility is facing mechanical challenges due to aging infrastructure and maintenance. We are moving immediately to rehabilitate and upgrade our processing capabilities.

Specifically, operational constraints in the plant's intake screens allowed debris to damage the aeration system, essentially the 'lungs' of the plant. When this equipment does not operate at full capacity, the biological balance of the Sludge Stabilization Basin (SSB) ponds is disrupted. Without sufficient oxygen, the water became stagnant, preventing these bacteria from working effectively and leading to the generation of hydrogen sulfide, which causes the 'rotten egg' odor experienced.

We are actively installing upgrades at the headworks (where wastewater enters the facility) and replacing aeration equipment to restore the facility's biological balance and resolve the situation.

Our Action Plan

City staff and our operational partners identified the issue and are taking aggressive steps to fix it:

- **Restoring Oxygen:** We are installing three temporary aerators through mid-February, to immediately pump oxygen back into the ponds while permanent replacements are expected to be delivered and installed in March.
- **Biologically Treating Odors:** We are dosing the SSB ponds with biological enzymes to help digest the organic buildup causing odors.
- **Equipment Upgrades:** We are installing "chopper pumps" as a new first line of defense. This technology shreds debris before it enters the system, providing a significant upgrade to how we process incoming wastewater.
- **Independent Review:** We are engaging with environmental experts to support the City Council's request for a public health study to ensure complete transparency regarding air and water compliance.

What to Expect

We want to be transparent about the path to recovery. As we install these new aerators over the next two weeks, you may notice a temporary increase in odors. This is expected as we disturb the

water to install new equipment, trapped odors may be released. This is a necessary, short-term step to restore the long-term health of the plant.

We expect to see gradual improvement as the system stabilizes over the next 4 to 6 weeks.

We take the quality of life of our residents seriously. We want you to enjoy your homes and neighborhoods without this disruption. City staff and our operational partners will continue daily monitoring and provide updates to the Council and the community until this issue is fully resolved.

Contact Us

For questions, please contact the Public Works Department at 831-636-4370 or publicwork@hollister.ca.gov For updates and additional information, please visit <https://hollister.ca.gov>