

POLICY

January 26, 2017

From: Gregory J. Smith, Supervisor, Water Protection & Land Use Programs



SUBJECT: POLICY CLARIFYING REQUIREMENT TO CONNECT TO SANITARY SEWER RATHER THAN REPAIR EXISTING ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM

Subsequent to the January 2016 adoption of the County Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) Ordinance, as well as the May 2016 update to the County's Onsite Systems Manual (OSM), Environmental Health has been asked to clarify County ordinance and OSM language related to the requirement to connect to sanitary sewer upon failure of, or the need for a major repair to, an existing OWTS.

Section 4.84.040 of County OWTS Ordinance states in part:

On property where an OWTS exists, and which structures served by an OWTS are within two hundred (200) feet of an approved available sanitary sewer, connection to the available sanitary sewer will be required at the time of OWTS Failure or when replacement or addition to the OWTS is required or proposed, provided any necessary approval from the appropriate sewer authority and the San Mateo County Local Agency Formation Commission is first obtained.

Section 1.O – Properties Near a Sanitary Sewer System, of the OSM states:

On property where there is an existing OWTS and where the structures served by the OWTS are within two hundred (200) feet of an approved available sanitary sewer, connection to the sanitary sewer will be required when addition to the OWTS is required or proposed or a major repair is required or proposed, provided any necessary approval from the planning and building department of record, the appropriate sewer authority and the San Mateo County Local Agency Formation Commission is first obtained.

Environmental Health has been asked to clarify that an exemption from these requirements **can be granted** under certain circumstances. It was the intent of the OWTS Ordinance and OSM to consider site-specific conditions that include, but are not limited to **availability of sanitary sewer and cost of repair/replacement of the OWTS versus connection to sanitary sewer** (State Water Resources Control Board OWTS Policy Section 9.4.9). Any request for exemption from OWTS Ordinance Section 4.84.040 requires a written request. All requests will be evaluated as part of the exemption process outlined in OWTS Ordinance Section 4.84.185. Environmental Health is required to evaluate exemptions with the purpose of ensuring that public and environmental health are appropriately protected, as mandated in State OWTS Policy.

We encourage you to talk with Environmental Health staff if you have any questions about these requirements or this policy. It is our intent to include this clarifying language in the next update to the OSM.

