


Date:	Thu, 17 Feb 2005 05:33:34 -0800 (PST)
From:	"CORALations" <coralations@yahoo.com>  Add to Address Book
Subject:	Attention Christian Molinar
To:	cmolinari@bnamericas.com

Dear Christain:

This is an excellent editorial, but I would like to clarify some statements attributed to me if possible. PRASA has six primary WWTP with ocean outfall. These plants have terrible compliance record to even primary waste water removal standards. While in spirit this violates the US Clean Water Act, technically have been given 20 years by the US EPA to come into "voluntary" compliance to secondary removal standards. This decision was made at around the 30th anniversary of the CWA and after we brought to the attention of the U.S. Executive Coral Reef Task Force that EPA had failed to grant or deny CWA waivers to these plants for over a decade. These plants were discharging in some case for over a decade industrial waste devoid of pre-treatment. Technically what makes the discharge illegal, is the non-compliance of the effluent to their own standards set. The out of the pipe water quality analysis.

Given your audience I need to clarify what was written as a quote regarding sustainable WWT technologies. What I stated was that PRASA and EPA rely on standard industrial information regarding the cost of building a new advanced secondary or tertiary plants, without considering costs of re-tooling existing plants (i.e. from adv primary to adv. secondary) Currently there are some inoculators being used that we understand are showing some success in the larger plants. No chemicals or chlorine. It is the bacteria eating the wastes that require oxygenation, they do not oxygenate the waste water.

Many thanks,

"BNamericas.com" <info@bnamericas.com> wrote:



 **Email to a Friend**

Christian Molinari (cmolinari@bnamericas.com) recommends you read the following article from Business News Americas.

Personal message from Christian Molinari: Good morning MaryAnn. As promised, here is a copy of the story I wrote up after our conversation. I was able to contact people in other organizations (AAA and EPA) as well to get their side of the story. I hope you like the article. Saludos, Christian

Title: Environmentalists sue AAA over sewage discharge - Puerto Rico

Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2005 17:19 (GMT-0400)

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Environmentalists sue AAA over sewage discharge - Puerto Rico

Wednesday, February 16, 2005 17:19 (GMT-0400)

(BNamericas.com) Environmental organizations ALS and Coralatons have filed suit in US federal court against Puerto Rico's (PR) aqueduct and sewerage authority (AAA), Coralatons director Mary Ann Lucking told BNamericas.

"Together with the American Littoral Society [ALS], we filed suit under [the US'] clean water act to get the AAA to stop discharging sewage into the reefs" on PR's coastline, she said, confirming US and PR reports.

Coralatons - an organization formed to protect coral reef - charges the AAA illegally discharges wastewater via sewage emission pipes from six primary treatment plants.

"The AAA is in violation of discharge levels, which not only affects the reef area but also a whole people who make their living off of the coastline," she said.

The PR unit of the US environmental protection agency (EPA) has requested that AAA install a secondary wastewater treatment plant for discharges into Ponce bay. However, the AAA is appealing that decision and the EPA is evaluating public commentary and studies submitted to it on the matter, including information from the AAA, EPA Puerto Rico director Carl Soderberg told BNamericas.

At the same time, the EPA needs to be more aggressive and is reacting only due to the environmentalists' actions, according to Lucking. "In order to sue in a US federal court, you first have to send a 60-day letter of intent to sue," she said. "The EPA began acting on this when they received notice of the [ALS and Coralatons] intent to sue."

The EPA's Soderberg disagrees. "We only found out about this suit from the local press - we have looked for a copy of the notice, as well as a copy of the lawsuit, but I personally have not seen either," he said. "Until we see a copy of the lawsuit to see what it is about, we

cannot take any actions."

AAA'S DEFENSE

"We are not in violation of any law," the director of the AAA's fulfillment area, Marta Rivera told BNamericas. "Sewage is first treated and then sent to deepwater emission pipes, to depths where there is no coral."

Some of the emission pipes have experienced fissures, Rivera said. "But we received quotes from 17 companies around the world to fix those leaks, and that takes time. The first leak has been repaired by a British company and the second is in the process of being repaired by a Canadian firm."

Further, the AAA takes monthly samples of the seawater in the area of the wastewater emissions, and "we have found no impact at all," she said.

The EPA's Soderberg agrees the AAA is not breaking the law with primary deepwater emissions of wastewater. "The Clean Water Act of 1977 establishes a mechanism for dispensing wastewater - it must have at least some primary treatment and cannot have untreated industrial discharge."

The issue is with the leaks along the deepwater sewage emission pipes, he added.

The AAA contends that it carries out advanced primary treatment with polymers, and any industrial waste it receives must arrive pre-treated to its plant, Rivera said.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The environmentalist groups are eager to work together with the EPA in defining and embracing cost-effective means for treating wastewater more effectively, Coralation's Lucking said.

"There are easier and cheaper ways to treat the sewage rather than installing an expensive secondary treatment plant," she said. "You can re-tool the primary plant and use bacteria to oxygenate the waste."

"Reports say we have lost 80% of the live coral coverage [worldwide] over the last three decades, and that's something to worry about," Lucking added.

The EPA expects to come to a decision on the AAA's possible secondary treatment plant within a couple of months.

By Christian Molinari

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