

STATE OF WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

PUBLIC NOTICE OF INFORMATIONAL HEARING AND INTENT TO REISSUE A WISCONSIN
POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM (WPDES) PERMIT No. WI-0025593-10-0

Permittee: SUPERIOR SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEM, 51 E First St, Superior, WI 54880

Facility Where Discharge Occurs: Superior Sewage Disposal System, 51 E First St, Superior, WI

Receiving Water And Location: Main Plant - Superior Bay of Lake Superior; CSTP 2 - A slip emptying into Superior Bay of Lake Superior; CSTP 5 - The Nemadji River; CSTP 6 - St. Louis Bay of Lake Superior

Brief Facility Description: The City of Superior owns and operates 4 wastewater treatment plants.

The Main Plant is an activated sludge facility, which receives the bulk of the domestic, industrial and combined sewer wastewater flow. It is designed to treat 7,600,000 gallons per day with actual flows averaging 3,500,000 gallons per day (2021-2025 data). The facility consists of screen and grit chambers to remove debris; chemical addition to enhance phosphorus removal; primary settling tanks; aeration basins where wastewater mixes with activated sludge; final settling tanks and UV disinfection prior to discharge to Superior Bay of Lake Superior. Activated sludge is composed of solids containing naturally occurring bacteria recycled from the treatment system which is used to metabolize organics in the wastewater. The settled solids (sludge) from the clarifiers (waste activated sludge), is removed and treated through anaerobic digestion to reduce harmful pathogens. Sludge is dewatered using a belt filter press and hauled to a landfill for final disposal.

The other treatment plants are referred to as “Combined Sewer Treatment Plants or “CSTPs”. These are overflow locations within the combined sewer districts that have the ability to provide treatment prior to discharge.

CSTP 2, located adjacent to the Main Plant, receives the excess flows during wet weather events which cannot be handled effectively by the Main Plant. Discharges are intermittent and depend on the incoming wasteload and volume of stormwater from the combined collection system. From 2021 through 2025 there was a total of 18 days of discharge through the CSTP 2 outfall. The facility consists of screening; chemical addition to enhance phosphorous removal; an aerated basin for biological treatment and settling; chlorine disinfection followed by dechlorination prior to discharged to a boat slip connected to Superior Bay.

Effluent from the CSTP 2 basin can also be discharged using the “parallel biological treatment system” option. The parallel biological treatment system involves combining biologically treated effluent from the CSTP 2 basin with treated effluent from the main plant at a point located just upstream of the main plant’s UV disinfection system; the combined effluent is ultimately discharged via the main plant outfall (001). CSTP 2 chlorine disinfection and discharge via Outfall 002 is only used when the capacity of main plant UV system and outfall 001 has been maximized.

CSTP 5 and CSTP 6 are physical/chemical treatment facilities. Both plants receive only stormwater and wastewater from domestic sources. At each facility large asphalt-lined retention ponds store collected wastewater. This wastewater can either be held and pumped to the Main Plant for treatment during low-flow periods, or treated on-site by two stage settling with coarse and fine screening during high flow periods. CSTP 5 is located on the south edge of the City near South Superior, and CSTP 6 is located in the northwest corner of the community in Billings Park. The plants are operated about 4.0 days each year (2021 to 2025 data) after large rainfall and snowmelt events. CSTP 5 discharges to the Nemadji River and CSTP 6 discharges to St. Louis Bay.

Permit Drafter’s Name, Address, Phone and Email: Sheri A. Snowbank, DNR, 810 W Maple St, Spooner, WI 54801, (715) 635-4131, Sheri.Snowbank@wisconsin.gov

Basin Engineer’s Name, Address, Phone and Email: Eric de Venecia, DNR, 1701 N 4th St, Superior, WI 54880, (715) 685-4155, Eric.deVenecia@wisconsin.gov

The Department has tentatively decided that the above-specified WPDES permit should be reissued.

Proposed Mercury Variance: The Department has determined that a water quality-based effluent limitation (WQBEL) of 1.3 ng/L for mercury is needed to protect wildlife and human health in the above-named receiving water. The permittee has applied for an alternative mercury effluent limitation (AMEL). The application included a pollutant minimization program (PMP) plan for mercury as required under s. NR 106.145(8), Wis. Adm. Code. The Department concludes that the permittee is eligible for a variance based on the information submitted, information on file and the findings provided in s. NR 106.145(1), Wis. Adm. Code. The Department and the permittee have mutually agreed upon an AMEL of 4.8 ng/L, expressed as a daily maximum, continued influent and effluent monitoring, and permit language requiring implementation of the PMP. The Department proposes to grant the AMEL, which represents a variance to the water quality standard used to derive the WQBEL, as provided for under s. NR 106.145(6), Wis. Adm. Code. The designated use of the receiving water will not change as a result of the variance. This mercury variance must be approved by USEPA prior to its inclusion in the final reissued permit.

Hearing Date, Time, and Location: **Wednesday, October 7, 2026, at 11:00am,**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/jptZzEg4QYUxE0fexSxpLg>

Hearing Officer, Name, Address, City/State/Zip, and Phone: Sarah Donoughe, DNR, 2984 Shawano Ave, Green Bay, WI 54313, (920) 366-6076

The Department of Natural Resources, pursuant to s. 283.49, Wis. Stats, has scheduled for the time and place listed above, a public hearing for the purpose of giving all interested persons an opportunity to make a statement with respect to the above announced permit action for this existing discharge.

A hearing officer will conduct the hearing in an orderly and speedy way and will use procedures specified in Subchapter II of ch. NR 203, Wis. Adm. Code, necessary to insure broad public participation in the hearing.

The hearing officer will open the hearing and make a concise statement of the scope and purpose of the hearing and shall state what procedures will be used during the course of the hearing. The hearing officer shall explain the method of notification of the final decision to grant or deny the permit and the methods by which the decision may be reviewed in a public adjudicatory hearing.

The hearing officer may put limits on individual oral statements to ensure an opportunity for all persons present to make statements in a reasonable period of time and to prevent undue repetition. The hearing officer may also limit the number of representatives making oral statements on behalf of any person or group.

Informational and clarifying questions and oral statements shall be directed through the hearing officer. Cross-examination shall not be allowed.

Persons wishing to comment on or object to the proposed permit action are invited to do so by attending the public hearing or by submitting any comments or objections in writing to the Department of Natural Resources, at the above-named permit drafter's address. All comments or suggestions received from members of the public no later than 7 days following the date of this public hearing will be used, along with other information on file and testimony presented at the hearing, in making a final determination. Where designated as a reviewable surface water discharge permit, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is allowed up to 90 days to submit comments or objections regarding this permit determination.

Information on file for this permit action, including the draft permit, fact sheet and permit application, may be inspected and copied at either the above-named permit drafter's office or the above named basin engineer's office, Monday through Friday (except holidays), between 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Please call the permit drafter or basin engineer for directions to their office location, if necessary. Information on this permit action may also be obtained by calling the permit drafter at (715) 635-4131 or by writing to the Department. Reasonable costs (15 cents per page for copies and 7 cents per page for scanning) will be charged for information in the file other than the public notice, permit and fact sheet. Permit information is also available on the internet at:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wastewater/PublicNotices.html>. Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodation, including the provision of informational material in an alternative format, will be made to qualified individuals upon request.