

SEWAGE TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL

Urbanization and high density development of coastal areas has resulted in a substantial increase in proposals to construct sewage treatment and discharge facilities in coastal wetlands. Since many of these facilities utilize gravity flow systems for movement of waste water and materials, wetlands and other low-lying areas are often targeted as sites for placement of treatment facilities. Since treatment facilities are not water dependent with regard to positioning, it is not essential that they be placed in wetlands or other fragile coastal habitats. The guidance provided for Cables, Pipelines and Transmission Lines also applies to sewage collector and discharge pipelines. Additional guidelines for Housing Developments, Marinas and Water Intakes/Discharges may also apply. The following guidance should be considered in association with other aspects of sewage treatment and discharge:

- a. Sewage treatment facilities should be constructed entirely in uplands.
- b. Discharges should be treated to meet State Water Quality Standards. Implementation of up-to-date methodologies for reducing discharges of biocides (e.g. chlorine) and other toxic substances is encouraged.
- c. Use of land treatment and upland disposal/storage techniques of solid waste should be implemented where possible. Use of vegetated wetlands as natural filters and pollutant assimilators for large scale wastewater discharges should be limited to those instances where wetlands have been specifically created for this purpose and the overall environmental and ecological suitability of such an action has been demonstrated.
- d. Discharging into open ocean waters is generally preferable to discharging into estuarine waters since discharging into estuarine waters has a higher potential to result in living marine resources contamination and nutrient overloading. Discharge points in coastal waters should be located well away from critical habitats such as oyster reefs, marshes, sand and mud flats, seagrass beds, endangered species habitats and other sensitive habitats. Proposals to locate outfalls in coastal waters must be accompanied by hydrographic studies that demonstrate year round dispersal characteristics and provide proof that effluents will not reach or affect fragile and productive habitats.
- e. Sewage outfalls should not be located near a public recreational facility.