

The Straight Scoop: *Sometimes all the information does not make it into a media story or mistakes are made in reporting the news, all of which can confuse the public. In those situations, the ICC wants to set the record straight.*

Maryland State Highway Administration Responds to Anacostia Watershed Society; ICC is in Compliance

Recently, the Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS) alleged that the Intercounty Connector (ICC) was pumping turbid water out of an ICC construction site directly into the Indian Creek headwaters. A video and photographs accompanied the allegations, which incorrectly identified the source and cause of the discharge as the construction of Culvert CS-4 in Contract C. Unfortunately, an AWS “action alert” was widely circulated without verification of the information.

The majority of flow coming from the black pipe in the video was diverted storm water runoff from offsite areas upstream of the ICC. It also included a small portion of *treated* water from the ICC’s approved treatment facilities. The flow was not a result of a pumping operation to remove water from an excavated area as alleged, but is a combination of mostly storm water drainage from the surrounding area and treated water from the two upstream sediment traps near the I-95/ICC interchange construction.

The water’s turbid condition was a result of recent rain exceeding the water quality treatment capacity of the upstream sediment traps. Approved sediment and erosion controls in Maryland are designed to treat the first one inch of runoff per regulatory standards. In approximately just 9.5 hours on December 8 and 9, this area received over three inches of rain and runoff from snowmelt.

Equally important, the pump in the video is draining water from the culvert construction and sending it to the ICC’s innovative on-site water treatment system located well up gradient from the culvert. This water is then treated and tested to confirm compliance with the Maryland Water Quality Standards.

Although in compliance, the State Highway Administration (SHA) continues to work with the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to identify additional methods that go above and beyond what is mandated to improve water clarity.

To improve the water treatment of this area, the design builder has committed to enlarge the sediment traps and to pump down traps between storms to increase holding capacity and decrease the chance of an overflow. All pumped water will continue to be treated, tested and released in accordance with the Maryland Water Quality Standards.

If you have questions regarding the ICC, please call the ICC toll free Hotline at 1-866-462-0020.

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