



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Washington Aqueduct implements water supply protection measures following Potomac Interceptor sewage spill; no impact on drinking water

WASHINGTON — Washington Aqueduct crews have implemented numerous precautionary measures to ensure safe regional water supply following the Jan. 19 collapse of the Potomac Interceptor sewer line that has sent millions of gallons of sewage into the Potomac River northwest of Washington.

The Washington Aqueduct collects, purifies and pumps drinking water from the Potomac River for its three wholesale customers: [DC Water](#), [Arlington County](#) and [Fairfax Water](#). The utility operates two intake facilities along the Potomac River at Great Falls and Little Falls, Maryland. The sewage overflow is downstream of the utility's primary intake facility at Great Falls, a gravity-fed system which provides raw water supply to the Dalecarlia Reservoir prior to reaching the Dalecarlia Water Treatment Plant, where it undergoes full conventional treatment before water is distributed to each wholesale customer.

Intakes at the Little Falls Pumping Station ceased operations immediately upon notification of the spill and will remain closed until there is incident resolution and raw water quality levels have returned to normal.

No impact to Washington Aqueduct operations, or the region's water supply, is expected.

Great Falls's gravity-fed design ensures the facility can operate without reliance on electricity, a vital redundancy measure and important consideration ahead of winter storm Fern, which is expected to reach the local area this evening. Furthermore, ice-eaters have been installed and activated at the Great Falls location to prevent freezing of water in the intakes.

DC Water, which operates the sewer system including the Potomac Interceptor sewer line, has mobilized its crews and contractors to mitigate and contain the overflow. Washington Aqueduct remains in close communication with DC Water as they conduct repairs.

Washington Aqueduct is prepared to continue mission essential functions during winter storm Fern. Staff responsible for the oversight of the treatment process, including those who conduct sample collections and perform physical inspections across geographically dispersed locations, will be grounded and provided on-site overnight accommodations once adverse weather begins to mitigate risk of injury and damage to government property. Maintenance has received replenished fuel and propane supplies to ensure adequate levels for continued operations in anticipation of below-freezing temperatures and expected snowfall. Additionally, heavy equipment has been strategically deployed to key sites.

A division of the Baltimore District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Washington Aqueduct is a federally owned and operated public water supply agency that produces an average of 150 million gallons of water per day at two treatment plants located in the District of Columbia.

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Additional Information

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