



**"RE-BUILDING THE CITY'S WATER SYSTEMS FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY"**

# **Sewerage & Water Board** OF NEW ORLEANS

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## **For Immediate Release**

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## **S&WB Finance Committee Hears Presentations on Drainage System Condition Assessment, Stormwater Management**

**New Orleans** – After the rain events of July and August 2017, The Sewerage & Water Board (S&WB) commissioned a series of deep-dive analyses by outside consultants to better understand the best ways to improve infrastructure and management toward ensuring the future health and safety of New Orleans.

Those consultants, Veolia, CH2M, Raftelis and the Water Institute, presented their findings at a special meeting of the S&WB Finance Committee Monday, March 19, 2018.

- Veolia provided a detailed assessment of the drainage system's conditions, from pumps to power
- CH2M provided modeling of different rain event scenarios to help the S&WB prepare for future storms
- Raftelis presented its 2016, long-range assessment of the S&WB's finances to offer potential solutions to rebuild, improve and maintain the citywide drainage system
- The Water Institute examined ways for the S&WB to use data to better manage storm water

The S&WB will take all these findings under serious consideration. But the agency did not wait for final results before embarking on serious improvements after August 2017. For instance:

- All major drainage pumps (bigger than 1000 cfs) have been returned to service. Three minor pumps, including two constant-duty pumps, remain under repair.
- Strides have been made to improve the reliability of the S&WB's power supply. Four electro-motive diesel (EMD) generators have been installed at the Carrollton Water Plant.
- Repairs to Turbines 3 and 5 are nearing completion. The refurbishment of Turbine 4 is progressing.
- Replacement of feeders to critical drainage pumping stations is well underway.

The S&WB invited these experts in to provide a transparent and accurate description of New Orleans' drainage system condition and the challenges it faces. Their findings supply sound starting points by which to make monumental improvements in how the S&WB continues to perform. The more information the S&WB has to work with, the greater the opportunity it has to minimize the risks that come with heavy rains and major storms.

"We appreciate the work that went into producing these reports and are already implementing many of the recommendations contained in them," said Marcie Edwards, Interim Executive Director for the Sewerage and Water Board. "I'm proud of the work Sewerage and Water Board employees and contractors have performed under emergency conditions to stabilize and harden our power and drainage system since last August, but the job is far from done. Our system is old and breaks too often. More resources and manpower will be needed to provide our customers the drainage system they deserve."

### **Background on Today's Presentations:**

#### **Veolia Emergency Service Contract**

The Veolia Emergency Services Contract was issued on August 25, 2017. The purpose was to conduct a snapshot in-time condition assessment of the drainage system facilities to inform S&WB's maintenance program. Veolia was also tasked with developing a Visibility Platform to facilitate the improved operation of the drainage system. This Platform was demonstrated during the Veolia presentation.

New Orleans drainage system is old and in a constant state of emergency repair. Veolia's findings show that a significant increase in resources and manpower will be needed to provide customers the drainage system they demand.

#### **CH2M Emergency Stormwater Contract**

The presentation on stormwater modeling summarizes the modeling support activities undertaken by CH2M following the August 5 event. Stormwater models developed by previous consultants were used and expanded upon to function as decision-support tools to help the SWB prepare response activities for Hurricanes Harvey and Nate, as well as evaluate the potential flooding impacts of a variety of storms and operational conditions.

## **Raftelis Drainage System Funding Feasibility Analysis**

Raftelis was retained to perform a drainage fee feasibility analysis. Raftelis analyzed the existing stormwater management program, costs, revenues, emerging needs and costs, a funding shortfall, and funding options, as well as the feasibility of additional revenue sources. The analysis noted that in the future, existing services provided by S&WB must be continued all while costs continue to rise as our infrastructure ages. Raftelis is recommending a stormwater management fee to help mitigate those costs.

## **Water Institute of the Gulf: Stormwater Management and Forecasting in New Orleans**

The Water Institute worked with the S&WB Interim Emergency Management Team to comprehensively evaluate drainage components, review warning systems in other communities, and provide a set of recommendations on next steps toward New Orleans better managing stormwater. They reviewed and evaluated existing surface and sub-surface drainage models, the level of integration of complex drainage systems into models, ability of models to accurately capture flood extent, duration, and general rainfall response.

## **Path Forward**

These analyses will be part of a foundation by which the S&WB's Board of Directors can develop financial and operational strategies toward lasting improvement of New Orleans' drainage system. The presentations Monday before the Finance Committee are for informational purposes only.

The Interim Executive Team will review these findings and develop recommendations for the full Board of Directors consider. All efforts will be done in coordination with the administrations of Mayor Landrieu and Mayor-Elect Cantrell.

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