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## **News Release**

# **City of Atlanta Reaches Proposed Agreement to Extend Sewer-Related Work**

*Final completion date to be extended through July 1, 2027*

**Atlanta** – City of Atlanta officials have reached a proposed agreement with the United States and the State of Georgia on important modifications to a 1999 federal wastewater consent decree, including the extension of the final completion date to July 1, 2027 from July 1, 2014. The extension will provide regulatory relief to Atlanta by allowing the city to complete the limited remaining work under the consent decree in a cost effective manner. The purpose of the decree is to eliminate sewer overflows into rivers and streams around the City of Atlanta.

“Since 1999, the City of Atlanta has dramatically reduced the number of sewer spills and significantly decreased the number of rain-induced overflows into Atlanta’s rivers and streams,” said Mayor Kasim Reed. “The consent decree extension will allow the city to continue vital infrastructure repairs that reduce sewage overflows and protect our natural resources and drinking water. I deeply appreciate the efforts of all parties in negotiating this agreement, which enables the city to complete its work without putting any further burden on ratepayers.”

The extension of the final completion date for the 1999 consent decree to July 1, 2027 will allow the city to address the remaining work needed on sewer overflow volumes and maintain and improve its drinking water system. The additional time will help alleviate additional financial burdens on the city and its ratepayers, which already include the highest water and wastewater rates in the country.

The modifications recognize the unprecedented investment already made in Atlanta’s wastewater system. To date, the city has spent over \$1.5 billion on consent decree required improvement

projects. The city is expected to spend an additional \$445 million to meet the remainder of the consent decree related work.

“This schedule extension will enable Atlanta to ensure that the remaining improvements to the wastewater system are completed in the most cost-effective manner while protecting public health and the environment,” said Jo Ann Macrina, Commissioner of the Department of Watershed. “These investments in the City’s infrastructure will continue to pay dividends for decades to come.”

The proposed agreement was reached in consultation with the Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper and is subject to approval of Atlanta City Council. The next steps, should the City Council and all the parties approve it, are lodging of the consent decree extension with the United States District Court and announcement of a public comment period. After evaluation of the public comments, the United States will determine whether to seek approval by the United States District Court.

“We recognize that these are very important issues to the Court and are hopeful that the Court will concur that this agreement is appropriate for completion of the limited work remaining under the consent decree,” said City Attorney Cathy Hampton.

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