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MEMORANDUM

RECEIVED

MAY 07 2001

GROUND WATER BUREAU

To: Mike Koranda, Director FOD
From: Darwin Pattengale, Manager DIV
Date: April 3, 2001
Subject: COMPLAINT LIQUID WASTE DISCHARGE FROM LOVINGTON WASTE TREATMENT PLANT

At 10:00am I received a call from Mr. Ron Price, Maintenance Forman of the City of Lovington's waste treatment plant saying that he could no longer keep quiet on what was happening in Lovington. On advice from his personal Doctor, Ron was urged to contact the Environment Department. Price's Cell Phone 390-1089

Up to 200,000 gallons of untreated raw sewage is being discharged onto open land between the Cheese Plant and the Vet Clinic on the edge of Lovington. There is a manhole directly behind a building called Petro Plate where the discharge is coming from. The Cheese Plant just recently issued HazMat suits to Ron and his other treatment plant workers because they are continually working in discharged raw sewage. Mr. Price states this has been going on for the past five (5) years. Repeated requests to Mr. Bob Carter, Lovington City Manager, to start work on a plan to solve the surfacing sewage problems throughout the City of Lovington has had no effect.

I have worked with Don Byers, Environmental Specialist, Hobbs, on many many surfacing sewage problems within the City of Lovington for the past three and a half years. I am well acquainted with their problems and have worked with Ron Price before and can tell you that he is a dedicated hard working person who is justly concerned. Mr. Price has video tapes and chemical analysis that he will make available to the Department and will cooperate in every way with us. He is well aware that in all likelihood, he will lose his job.

When the Cheese Plant was built several years ago, the discharge was piped directly into the City's system instead of building a pretreatment plant. When there was only one shift working five days a week, the City's sewer system was just able to keep up with the added flow. But for the past three or more years, the plant has been operating three shifts, seven days a week and the waste discharge from the plant is just too great. In addition, the City's waste treatment plant has deteriorated to the point that it can no longer treat the village's waste let alone the Cheese Plants' also.

This added flow and pressure has resulted in discharges all over town. When one of the lines becomes partially blocked, it will blow up through the nearest manhole and discharge hundreds of gallons of raw sewage. The waste plant workers then must deal with the mess and get it cleaned up, BUT NO OVERTIME, per Bob Carter.

Ron Price states that he does not want to lose his job and he is not out to get the city into trouble, but too many people are going to get very sick very soon and he realizes that he will probably be named the sacrificial goat and be blamed for not doing something sooner. So what does he really have to lose. This will, in all probability, find it's way to the Radio and TV media according to Mr. Price.

On July 21, 2000, Ground Water Quality Bureau approved a Discharge Plan Amendment, DP-87, for the Lovington Wastewater Treatment Plant. This is the latest information I have on the Plant. Mike, I am sending this to you only. If you want me to send it to Marcy Leavitt, let me know.

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