

July 25, 2010

A letter from NEORSD to our customers in Northfield Center Township, Macedonia, Northfield Village, Richfield Village, Sagamore Hills Township and Twinsburg:

As a resident of Northeast Ohio—no matter which county you call home—you live near one of the world's most valuable natural resources: Lake Erie. The Lake's recovery over the past 40 years is remarkable, yet problems persist and jeopardize Lake Erie's continued revitalization.

Stormwater runoff—and the flooding, erosion and pollution it causes—threatens this precious asset. It is our job as a region to protect Lake Erie and the many streams and rivers flowing into it. The **Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District's Stormwater Management Program** is essential to this work.

I am astounded by the actions of several elected officials in Summit County ("Elected officials say don't pay fee," *Akron Beacon Journal*, July 22, 2010). It is irresponsible of your elected officials to encourage you not to pay your bills. They should instead be helping you understand the Regional Stormwater Management Program, its benefits to Summit County, and Summit County's role in stormwater problems and solutions.

These officials have put a lot of information out there—information that appears to be intentionally misleading. I want you to hear the facts straight from me:

- **Problems caused by stormwater runoff are only getting worse.** In 1978, we found 138 major regional problems related to stormwater. By 2002, that number was 513. With stormwater funding eliminated from the budgets of some Summit County communities, the problems will only escalate if not addressed.
- **The Sewer District's program will solve flooding, erosion and water quality problems in Summit County.** Fees collected in Summit County's communities are not going to "fix Cuyahoga County's problems," as has been repeatedly misstated. We will work to reduce flooding and erosion problems within the Cuyahoga River, Indian Creek, Brandywine Creek, Sagamore Creek and Furnace Run areas in Summit County.
- **The best way to solve regional problems caused by stormwater runoff is on a regional basis.** Stormwater knows no political boundaries and runoff from one community flows into neighboring communities. Summit County and its communities do not have the funds available to solve growing stormwater runoff problems on their own. The City of Macedonia, for example, has cut more than \$2 million from their Capital Improvement Budget since 2008 (they only have \$3,600 budgeted for 2010). How could they possibly provide any form of stormwater management for their residents? A regional solution is needed.
- **Every member community in Summit County will receive funding from the Sewer District to address local stormwater issues.** In addition to significant funds towards solving large regional problems and assuming maintenance responsibilities along regional streams in Summit County, the Sewer District has implemented a Community Cost Share Program. We will return 7.5 percent of fees collected from each community to that community for local stormwater-related projects. As a result, communities will benefit from larger regional projects and also have funding for local projects.
- **The 11 Summit County communities served by the Sewer District have representation on our Board of Trustees.** The Sewer District's 61 suburban member communities are represented by three board members: Mayor Gary Starr, Mayor Jack Bacci and Ronald Sulik. These board members are elected by the Suburban Council of Governments, or "COG," and they represent our COG communities, including those in Summit County. The Sewer District staff has no say in how the Board is structured; however, member communities do. Summit County's COG members are more than welcome to address this issue if they so choose.
- **The Sewer District has the authority to implement this program.** Even in 1972, when the Sewer District was formed, the founding judge realized the importance of regional stormwater management. Judge George J. McMonagle directed the Sewer District to "develop a detailed integrated capital improvement plan for regional management of wastewater collection and storm drainage . . . in the District." In January 2010, the Sewer District proactively went back to the Court to reaffirm our authority to implement the Stormwater Management Program.

Many elected officials have been eager to criticize our plan, throwing around inaccurate statements under the pretense of protecting your interests. They are playing political games, using your wallets and the health of our environment as pawns.

The bottom line is that our Stormwater Management Program will benefit our member communities in Summit County.

I ask you this: How can these elected officials adequately represent you and your interests when they have refused to learn about our plan for regional stormwater management and have declined our invitation to present a plan of their own?

If you have questions about the Stormwater Management Program, you can contact me directly at (216) 881-6600 x6898 or ciaccia@neorsd.org. More information about this regional program is available online at neorsd.org/stormwater.

Together, we can all do our part to keep our Great Lake great.

Sincerely,



Julius Ciaccia
Executive Director, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District