



NEWS RELEASE

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New Castle County Unveils Clearwater Disconnect Program for Brandywine Hundred Sewer Customers

New Castle, DE - New Castle County Executive Chris Coons launched a Clearwater Disconnect Program for sewer customers in the Brandywine Hundred area, in an effort to address a decades long sewer overflow issue in the region. Clearwater connections in homes convey groundwater or stormwater into the sanitary sewer system in violation of the County's Unified Development Code.

"New Castle County has invested more than \$70 million to revitalize our aging sanitary sewer system in the Brandywine Hundred area," said County Executive Coons. "Assisting those who now occupy homes with clearwater connections helps the County create needed capacity in the sewer system and protect our local environment, without punishing owners who were unaware that such systems existed outside of County Code."

Of the roughly 24,000 properties in Brandywine Hundred, New Castle County estimates that as many as 3,600 homes may have existing clearwater connections. Residential clearwater connections send more than 28 million gallons of water per day into the sewer system during a heavy rain, sending the system over capacity at times, which can lead to sewer backups or overflows. Implementing this program will cost the County approximately \$5 million, compared to an estimated \$84 million to rehabilitate the sewer system or \$122 million cost to provide storage for the added capacity.

Through the new Clearwater Disconnect Program, sewer customers will be eligible for incentives of \$500 to \$2,500 to disconnect existing punctured floor drain and sump pump connections, provided they allow the County to inspect the system before and after the disconnection is complete. The County will also assist plumbers and other qualified contractors with training on code compliant clearwater disconnections, and will create a homeowner handbook about clearwater connections, the work needed to disconnect such systems, and typical designs.

For more information about clearwater sewer connections and the details of the new Clearwater Disconnect Program, please call the Department of Special Services at (302)395-5740.