



# Facts About the MPCA Sanitary Districts Program

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From 1998 through 2001, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) experienced decreased funding and lost about nine percent of its previous staffing level.

To assure that Minnesota's highest environmental priorities could still be met; the MPCA reduced service in some programs, including the program that creates Sanitary Districts, and discontinued a number of others.

## Introduction

The MPCA has the authority to review petitions for the creation of a sanitary district under Minn. Stat. §§ 115.18 to 115.37. The Agency's role is to insure that the petition requesting creation of the district meets all the administrative requirements outlined in the statute. The petition must also demonstrate that there is a need for "an adequate and efficient system" of collecting and treating wastes and that these purposes can be accomplished by the formation of a sanitary district.

The MPCA has dedicated the use of part of one staff person's working time to conduct reviews of sanitary district petitions and to provide minimal technical assistance.

## History and background

The law establishing creation of sanitary district under Minn. Stat. § 115.18 was enacted in 1961. However, this method of creating sanitary districts was not used until the 1990's when the Agency and local governments began focusing their efforts on unsewered communities and failing septic systems. The MPCA developed a

number of fact sheets and other guidance materials to assist applicants with their petitions and has provided some technical assistance when requested.

## Currently

- Staff time dedicated to Sanitary District activities is 0.25 FTE (full-time employee).
- The MPCA staff will continue to review and approve petitions to create sanitary districts under Minnesota Statutes 115.18 until the statute is rescinded.
- Staff time previously spent on reviews, technical assistance, and training is now very limited.

The MPCA staff will not act on projects that are controversial. Petitioners must demonstrate that the project has support from the local citizens affected by the project to keep the program running as smoothly as possible. The MPCA:

- Provides fact sheets accessible on the MPCA Web site.
- Provides a checklist of tasks and documents needed for a complete petition and made the checklist available to potential applicants on the MPCA Web site.
- Provides limited technical assistance by mailing additional guidance materials and examples to potential applicants when requested.
- Provides a fact sheet identifying other methods of creating sanitary districts on the MPCA Web site.

**Whom you should contact if you are:**

County, city or other local government personnel. For assistance with petitions and procedures for creating sanitary districts under Minn. Stat. §§ 115.18-115.37 Please contact our Detroit Lakes Office at 218-847-1519, toll-free at 800-657-3864; or TTY at 651-282-5332. Additional information can also be found at the MPCA Web site: [www.pca.state.mn.us](http://www.pca.state.mn.us) or [www.pca.state.mn.us/about/regions/nw.html](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/about/regions/nw.html).