UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region 1
5 Post Office Square, Suite 100
Boston, MA 02109-3912

June 3, 2013

Michael J. Hornbrook, Chief Operating Officer
Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
Charlestown Navy Yard
100 First Avenue, Building 39
Boston, MA 02129

Re: MWRA Permit Number MA 0103284
MWRA Ambient Monitoring for Floatables

Dear Mr. Hornbrook:

We received your letter of February 14, 2013 requesting an end to specific types of ambient monitoring for floatables detailed in the 2010 revisions to the Ambient Monitoring Plan (AMP). With this letter, EPA and MassDEP approve of your request.

The original AMP required monitoring of floatables in both the effluent and in ambient waters near the outfall site. The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) developed novel techniques to conduct some of this monitoring. In the revisions to the AMP in 2010, EPA and MassDEP approved an end to the effluent and routine net tows monitoring requirements but still required: (1) visual monitoring at the outfall site during routine water column surveys; (2) two wet weather net tow surveys annually subsequent to blending events at Deer Island Treatment Plant; and (3) analysis of fat particles collected in the net tows for contaminants of concern.

The results of this monitoring were reported in Rex and Delaney, 2013[1] (and in your February 14, 2013 letter), and were presented to the Outfall Monitoring Science Advisory Panel (OMSAP) meeting on April 1, 2013. The OMSAP also held a follow up conference call on May 10, 2013 to discuss the results. Monitoring results indicate few floatables were found near the outfall site compared to a control station, and floatables were not significantly associated with blending events.

OMSAP members recommended that EPA and MassDEP approve the request from MWRA to end the net tow monitoring requirements after blending events, and the

[1] Rex, A.C., Delaney, M.F. 2013. Summary of Marine Debris Observations at MWRA's Deer Island Treatment Plant effluent discharge site in Massachusetts Bay: 2000-2012. Boston:Massachusetts Water Resources Authority. Report 2013-01.

analysis of chemical contaminants in collected fat particles. The OMSAP, however, agreed that the MWRA should continue to make visual observations of floatables during routine surveys near the outfall site.

EPA and MassDEP believe that it is critical that the MWRA continue to implement visual observations of floatables to address the public concern that the MWRA discharge not cause aesthetic impacts in Massachusetts Bay. Please record and include the MWRA visual observations of floatables in the appropriate annual reports and permit submittals.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Matthew Liebman at 617-918-1626 or by email, or Cathy Vakalopoulos (MassDEP) at 617-348-4026 or by email.

Sincerely,

Matthew Liebman
Environmental Scientist
US EPA Region 1

cc: (via email)
Catherine Vakalopoulos, MassDEP
Andrea Rex, MWRA
Betsy Reilley, MWRA
Andy Solow, OMSAP
Brian Pitt, EPA
Michele Barden, EPA
Todd Borci, EPA

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