



# KALAMAZOO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

In the Pursuit of Extraordinary Governance...

September 11, 2018

Andrew Rudd, P.E.  
Wightman and Associates  
9835 Portage Road  
Portage, MI 49002

Re: South County Sewer and Water Authority USDA Proposed Sewer Project

Dear Mr. Rudd:

This letter is in response to your request for support of providing municipal sewer to the following areas of Schoolcraft and Brady Townships: Sugar Island Drive, Higley Circle (East and West), Circle Drive, US 131 from U Avenue to Lyons Street, US-131 from YZ Avenue to approximately ½ mile North of XY Avenue, the Village of Schoolcraft, Barton Lake Drive (North and South) as well as a small connecting portion of Portage Road south of Barton Lake, and East UV Avenue from Sprinkle Road to South 26<sup>th</sup> Street including a small portion of South 26<sup>th</sup> Street adjacent to Sprinkle Road. Our department is in support of municipal sewer serving properties in these areas. We are in support of this for the following reasons:

- Due to the generally small size of parcels in ageing plats, it is becoming increasingly difficult to locate replacement water wells and sewage treatment systems.
- Many of the older systems within the proposed sewer extension project areas do not meet current design standards. Specifically, 368 of 596 (61.7%) properties with known sewage treatment systems in the Village of Schoolcraft, have sewage treatment systems that do not comply with current sewage treatment system design standards. Also, an additional 97 properties have unknown sewage treatment systems due to records not being available.
- On some of the streets noted above, due to lot size and existing system locations, it may be necessary to remove old failed systems to install a sewage treatment system that meets today's design standards. This leads to an increased cost to the homeowner for a replacement system that has a limited lifespan.

In order to install on-site sewage treatment systems, several items are required to ensure compliance with the Kalamazoo County Sanitary Code. These items include maintaining four feet above signs of a high water table for the sewage treatment system (STS), maintaining 50 feet from an STS to a water well (including maintaining these distances from neighboring parcels), and maintaining 50 feet from an STS to surface water.

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**HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
Environmental Health Unit

311 East Alcott Street | Kalamazoo, MI 49001  
Phone: 269.373.5210 | [www.kalcounty.com/eh](http://www.kalcounty.com/eh)

Also, the Kalamazoo County Sanitary Code requires a suitable area for new and replacement sewage treatment systems for new construction. This includes the requirement that greater than 24 inches from the ground surface to signs of high water table must be in place in order for a sewage treatment system permit to be granted. Current code also requires that new and replacement sewage treatment systems consist of a septic tank or tanks and a drainfield rather than drywells. Currently a variance is required for drywells to be installed for a replacement sewage treatment system. Drywells are not allowed to service new construction for a parcel. Although not indicative of every lot in your proposed sewer extension areas, some of these lots may be too small to meet code requirements for new construction.

Municipal sewer would provide protection of the groundwater in these areas and improve water quality. Protecting groundwater and increasing water quality can help protect the health of the citizens living in these communities

We are pleased to lend our support of this project and appreciate the opportunity to comment on this issue. If you have any further questions please contact me at (269) 373-5356.

Sincerely:



Vern Johnson, REHS, Environmental Health Director  
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Cc: Schoolcraft Township  
Village of Schoolcraft  
Brady Township  
South County Sewer and Water Authority