



NOT JUST ANOTHER SURVEY

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In the past couple of years, each and every reader has been asked to answer some questions in a brief survey. These questions may have been assembled in the form of a feedback survey presented after a service has been provided, or an appliance has been purchased. It happens on the telephone, or on a website while you are browsing. Does anyone remember back in the 1980s getting a letter in the mail and opening it up to find a crisp dollar bill inside, along with a survey for you to fill out? This is a form of market research and it is everywhere. Ultimately, surveys are designed to gather information so that a particular product or service can be improved upon and you, the consumer, will benefit from using the new, improved product or service. And this is good business sense for the company that made the effort to gather the information to improve the product or service which increases their market share of satisfied, repeat customers. And so the world turns. The challenge is getting people to share their time and experience, so that others may benefit.

In 2015, the U.S. EPA released the report "Case Studies on Implementing Low-Cost Modifications to Improve Nutrient Reduction at Wastewater Treatment Plants." This report provides information on low cost plant modifications that can reduce nutrient discharge levels. *"No-cost or low-cost activities can be implemented at existing WWTPs to significantly reduce effluent nutrient discharges with minimal negative impacts on operations. In fact, in most cases, the secondary impacts are overwhelmingly positive and include energy efficiency, lower operational costs, and improved process stability. Although most of the case studies did not specify the capital costs savings associated with their optimization approach over alternative approaches, several did. **Modifications at Crewe, Virginia, had a capital cost of \$6,000, compared with an estimated upgrade cost of \$800,000. Victor Valley spent \$1.1M instead of \$80M for a new treatment train. Two other case study contacts indicated that optimization saved significant money versus more capital intensive alternatives.**"* Realizing that most conventional secondary wastewater treatment facilities are not designed specifically to remove nutrients, the EPA was seeking information from facilities that were accomplishing nutrient

reductions without major capital expenditures. As significant as this report was, it also recognized that the participating contributors represented a very small number of systems and that further outreach and data collection would be necessary. Reaching out to the approximately 16,500 POTWs Nationwide, will identify significantly more opportunities to optimize nutrient removal for development into a more comprehensive guidance document. After all, wouldn't you want to be able to save your community from spending \$800,000 on an upgrade if you could accomplish the task by spending \$6,000, like they did in Crewe, Virginia?

Enter; the National Study of Nutrient Removal and Secondary Technologies: POTW Screener Questionnaire

The EPA is initiating a multi-year, multi-phased national study on nutrient discharges from POTWs in order to develop a nationwide database for nutrient discharge and removal, as well as identify and promote operation and management practices that result in improved nutrient removal from the wastewater. They will be seeking data on the profile and performance of POTWs across the country. To begin the process, the EPA needs to update and supplement existing information about each of your facilities. They have assembled approximately 20 questions that will help them to collect POTW identification and characterization data. Your participation is requested in order to provide a more complete industry profile. Even if you do not currently have nutrient removal requirements your updated POTW information is helpful.

It is estimated that it will take around 3 hours to complete this questionnaire due to the time it takes to look up certain information. Do not let this influence your decision to complete the questionnaire. It will be available online, and does not have to be completed in one sitting. You can begin, stop, and resume at your convenience to accommodate a busy schedule.

If you would like assistance with filling out the survey when it becomes available, please feel free to email me at Tucker@nyruralwater.org or give me a call at (518) 828-3155 x14 and we can work together to get this accomplished. 💧💧💧