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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

November 2, 2012

Lynn Canton
Regional Administrator
FEMA Region II
26 Federal Plaza
New York, NY 10278-0002

Dear Administrator Canton:

I am writing to request urgent action toward the resumption of operations at the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission's Newark wastewater treatment plant. As you know, this facility has been offline since Monday due to flood damage from Hurricane Sandy. For each day the plant is not in operation, about 300 million gallons of raw, untreated sewage are being discharged into area waterways. I am extremely concerned about the risk this issue poses for the health and safety of my constituents and millions of other New Jersey residents, as well as their access to safe, clean drinking water. My staff has been working closely with your agency and PVSC officials to coordinate a swift response to this increasingly dire situation since the storm hit northern New Jersey.

As one of the largest wastewater treatment facilities in the United States, the PVSC plant provides essential service to New Jersey's biggest population centers, including Newark, Jersey City, and my hometown of Paterson. The release of untreated sewage into our state's waterways presents a serious risk to public health and the environment, and I am also concerned about the consequences that such severe violations of the Clean Water Act may have. A resolution to this problem is long overdue, and I believe that we must find a way to cut through any red tape so that the treatment plant can be dewatered and brought back online as quickly as possible.

As you can see, I am alarmed by the severity of this issue, and I am prepared to do whatever I can to further expedite this process. At stake is the health and safety of millions of New Jersey residents who need access to safe drinking water. Please keep me updated as this situation progresses and let me know how I can be helpful to this effort.

Sincerely,

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress