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News Release

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Washington Aqueduct receives water treatment solids discharge permit from EPA Region 3

Baltimore – Under the terms of the final National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit issued today by the Environmental Protection Agency Region 3, the Army Corps of Engineers' Washington Aqueduct will begin work on a project that will change the way it disposes of the sediment from the Dalecarlia and Georgetown sedimentation basins. Once facilities are designed and constructed, the sediment will no longer be discharged to the Potomac River.

Because the Washington Aqueduct wholesale customers, the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority, Arlington County and the City of Falls Church, pay all costs for daily operations and capital improvements at the Washington Aqueduct, the Aqueduct expects to work closely with them and local, state and federal agencies and the general public, in fashioning the future sediment collection and disposal process. A wide range of options will be evaluated. The provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which has a public involvement component, will be used to arrive at the preferred alternative.

Interim operating conditions and a compliance schedule are contained in an accompanying draft Federal Facilities Compliance Agreement (FFCA) that EPA has posted for public notice at the following web site address <http://www.epa.gov/reg3wapd/>. These documents will replace the current permit issued in 1989.

Until alternate facilities are designed and constructed, the solids will continue to be periodically discharged to the Potomac River. The period from February 15 to June 15 each year has been designated spring spawning season so discharges during this time will be avoided. In advance of EPA issuing today's permit, the Washington Aqueduct had already voluntarily rearranged its operational schedules to avoid the spawning season this year.

Other conditions of the permit require an extensive series of water quality, sediment and life form studies. Some of these studies are likely to be the subject of further administrative action to refine their scope and content.