

# **DRAFT** Policies and Actions for OWTS Management

## **Water Quality State Guide Plan**

**10/15/13**

### **Goal: OWTS are managed (properly sited, designed, constructed and maintained) to protect groundwater and surface water quality and public health.**

Policy: Ensure proper siting, design and construction of onsite wastewater management systems. Actions:

- Implement current OWTS Rules and continually evaluate the effectiveness of these Rules.
- Provide sufficient training opportunities to meet the needs of OWTS design and installation professionals.
- Evaluate DEM licensed professionals through continual DEM oversight, including field inspections.
- Strengthen disciplinary process for DEM licensed professionals.
- Support development of alternative technologies.
- Develop an approach for assessing and responding to cumulative impacts of OWTS.
- Enhance the DEM data management system to allow for more efficient management of applications and integration of OWTS information across water quality management programs.

Policy: Ensure that OWTS are properly operated and maintained, with particular emphasis on alternative treatment systems. Actions:

- Evaluate performance of advanced treatment OWTS and the level of maintenance necessary. Revise rules, guidance and technology approvals accordingly.
- Establish a technical working group to develop standards and processes to ensure operation and maintenance of alternative treatment OWTS. Implement strategies accordingly.
- Establish operating permits for large OWTS to ensure permit compliance.
- Promote proper use of OWTS through active public outreach programs.

Policy: Local government wastewater programs facilitate proper OWTS operation and maintenance. Actions:

- Develop and implement local onsite wastewater management programs in communities that rely in whole or in part on OWTS.
- Provide funding for Community Septic System Loan Program (CSSLP) to meet the needs of the local onsite programs with respect to providing financial assistance to homeowners for repair and upgrade of OWTS.
- Require updated local Onsite Wastewater Management Plans to continue to be eligible for CSSLP.
- Improve data management systems to facilitate data sharing among the state agencies and local government programs.

Policy: Apply alternative technologies to reduce impacts of OWTS on sensitive resources. Actions:

- Continue implementation of denitrification requirements in the Salt Pond and Narrow River critical resource areas.
- Expand denitrification requirement to other poorly flushed coastal embayments that are documented to have nutrient caused water quality impairments due in part to OWTS.
- Evaluate technologies/strategies for phosphorus reduction in areas documented to have nutrient caused water quality impairments due in part to OWTS.
- Further investigate impacts of OWTS on private wells in densely developed areas and develop appropriate strategies to mitigate impacts.

Policy: Ensure wastewater management planning for OWTS and sewer areas is coordinated. (*This topic will also be addressed under the Wastewater Treatment/Sewering discussion*) Actions:

- Ensure that facilities planning for municipal/public sewer systems properly assesses areas for OWTS suitability.
- Require extension of sewers to areas currently served by OWTS where it is shown to be necessary to mitigate an existing water quality impairment caused in part by OWTS or to eliminate a threat to public health.
- Require connection to sewer systems where access exists.

Policy: Eliminate use of cesspools. Actions:

- Complete 2007 Cesspool Phaseout requirements.
- Eliminate continued use of large capacity cesspools as required by state and federal rules.
- Develop and implement strategies for further reduction of cesspool use at single family homes (e.g., point of sale).