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## End Sewage Spills in Our Streets and Beaches

### In Brief

Sewage spills are an all-too-frequent occurrence, and the problem is worsening as our infrastructure ages. Spill reports reveal that over 55 million gallons of sewage have been spilled in over 15,700 overflows from sanitary sewer collection and transport systems (“sanitary sewer overflows,” or SSOs) since the current permit was put place in 2007. Sewage treatment plants spill even more. Sewage spills put people at risk of infection and gastrointestinal illnesses. They can also starve fish of the oxygen they require and contaminate food sources for aquatic life.

### Legal Landscape

Sewage treatment by publicly owned treatment works is regulated by permits and supported by loans under the federal Clean Water Act. In 2006, the State Water Board set standards for sewage collection and transport systems through a permit under California law, and developed an online map of sanitary sewer overflows (SSO) from these collection and transport systems (*see* above map of 1,000+ gallon SSOs since the permit adoption). The State Water Board in 2011 will adopt an updated permit for these discharges. CCKA is strongly advocating for control of these discharges under both federal and state law, rather than solely state law, to ensure sufficient enforcement tools are available.

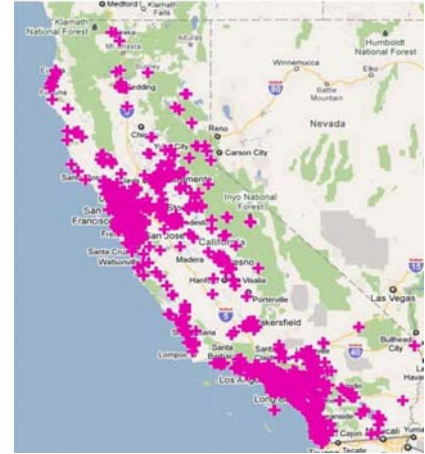
### Moving Forward

California’s sewage treatment plants and collection systems are prone to overflows and spills because they are aging and over capacity. The public must have online access to clear data reports on violations and enforcement, so that the entities responsible are held accountable, and so the public can avoid recreating near problem areas. A long-term solution to California’s sewage spill problem will require targeted investment in system upgrades, and a strong commitment to enforcing the law by local, state and federal authorities. The State Water Board is also in the process of developing, as per AB 885 (Jackson), a framework for regulating leaking septic systems at the state level.

**Learn more.** Review information on the State Water Board's Sanitary Sewer Overflow Program: [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/sso/](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/sso/). View a map of bacteria-impaired waterways by clicking Map and Bacteria at: [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/tmdl/integrated2010.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/integrated2010.shtml).

### SANITARY SEWER OVERFLOWS: 01/01/2007 - 02/28/2011

Spill type: + Category 1 o  
Category 2  
Click on a map icon for incident information.



SSOs 1,000-1,000,000+ gals. SWRCB.

Key Issues: Water Quality, Sewage Infrastructure, SSOs, Beaches, Public Health

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