



TO: FRUITA CITY COUNCIL AND MAYOR

FROM: KIMBERLY BULLEN, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

DATE: APRIL 22, 2025

AGENDA TEXT: Sewer Service Rules & Regulations – Fats-Oils-Grease (FOG) Program (7:00 p.m. – 7:45 p.m.)

PURPOSE

To provide the City Council and Mayor with information regarding proposed additional rules and regulations for the city's sanitary sewer system and specifically the development of a Fats – Oils – Grease (FOG) program.

The purpose of a FOG Program is to prevent the introduction of excessive amounts of fats, oils, and grease into the city's wastewater collection system in amounts that, along or in combination with other discharges, have the potential to disrupt flows in the system or cause interference and pass through to the City's wastewater reclamation facility.

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to the Fruita Municipal Code, Chapter 13.24 Sewer Service Regulations and specifically 13.24.020 Rules and Regulations – Adoption and Enforcement Authority, the City Council shall make and enforce such rules and regulations as it may deem necessary for the safe, efficient and economical management of the city sewer system.

The City of Fruita Wastewater system is regulated through the EPA Clean Water Act and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) which is the permit issued to control the discharge of liquids or other substances to surface waters of the United States. The city is currently in the permit renewal process with the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment.

FOG is introduced primarily from food service establishments that prepare and serve large volumes of food. However, additional FOG can also originate from individual homes. Excess FOG from food service establishments (FSE's) can accumulate in sanitary sewer collection lines, wet wells, and pumping stations. Such FOG accumulation can restrict sewer flow and cause collection line blockages, resulting in sewage backups and potential public health risks.

The primary goal of a FOG Control Program is to reduce sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) and blockages and to protect public health and the environment by minimizing public exposure to unsanitary conditions. By controlling the discharge of FOG to the wastewater collection system, FOG buildup in sewer lines can be lessened, thereby increasing the system's operating efficiency and reducing the

number of sewer line blockages, overflows, and maintenance of the system. In November of 2021, Public Works staff sent a FOG Questionnaire to every restaurant in the City of Fruita to better understand how each business manages their FOG. The questionnaire requested information such as facility and plumbing information and specific information about their grease traps or grease interceptors and cleaning schedules.

Public Works staff then followed up with the restaurant to answer questions and provide educational material on the proper disposal of FOGs. Staff also provided information in the City's weekly updates periodically on proper disposal of FOG material.

By bringing attention to the issue and providing public education material on how to dispose of Fats – Oils – Grease, staff was hopeful to see a reduction in FOG accumulation at the I-70 lift station. This was not the result. Staff continued to see a significant accumulation of FOG, estimated at 1,500 – 2,000 gallons per week requiring staff to pump out the lift station and haul material to the WWRF for disposal.

The pumping and hauling of FOG has created financial and mechanical issues for both the utilities division and mechanical treatment at the WWRF. A secondary disposal pit was created at the WWRF as the FOG would plug the mechanical screens creating higher flows, run times, and maintenance. This caused scenarios of FOG and sewage to build up causing staff multiple hours a day cleaning screens within the disposal pit. With the disposal pit being full of FOG, normal utility maintenance would have to be put on hold as debris removed from within the collection system could not be disposed of at the WWRF. Multiple modifications at the I-70 lift station and the WWRF over time aided in the reduction of time, but ultimately, disposal issues continued. For nearly ten years of FOG pumping, hauling, and disposal, the cost to the City of Fruita is estimated to be \$345,600.00.

In 2023, the City contracted with Tetra Tech Engineering to develop a FOG Best Management Practices (BMP) Guidance document. This included information on how similarly sized wastewater utilities are enforcing FOG ordinances and providing copies of similar utility ordinances; identification of BMPs that are reasonable and appropriate to adopt for FOG Ordinance enforcement; identification of self-certification schedules for restaurants to comply with cleanout and associated documentation; and templates for restaurant FOG ordinance compliance self-certification. The communities we reviewed include the City of Grand Junction, City and County of Broomfield, Frisco Sanitation District, City of Pueblo, Snake River Wastewater Utility, and Gilbert, AZ.

In 2023, Public Works ordered a chemical product, "Greasezilla" that is a biocatalyst technology that helps to break up the grease in the lift station. This requires storing the chemical and weekly dosing by Public Works staff. This product has been proven to work in breaking up the thick pad of grease that accumulates in the lift station resulting in less frequent pumping out of the lift station but will be an ongoing expense for the sewer fund. This does not provide any benefit to the collection system as it is dosed at the lift station after the FOG has already passed through the collection system. (1) 275-gallon tote costs \$9,200. Public Works will continue to use this product as a component of the FOG program.

In 2024, Public Works Utilities and Treatment staff participated in a 3-day Western States Alliance training course sponsored by the USDA and EPA. Western States Alliance is a project of the Pollution Prevention Resource Center that helps professionals identify and implement best practices in Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) management. Public Works staff also developed a "Draft" FOG Management Program Policy and met with the Building Department and Planning Department to review the policy.

Public Works staff also evaluated several different FOG Software Programs used to help businesses and city staff track information for compliance and found an inexpensive but comprehensive software program (FOG BMP) that will be purchased by the city and provided to all businesses free of charge to use for compliance purposes. This program will provide each client with comprehensive software training and support and provides training to all waste haulers.

The City of Fruita's goal for establishing a FOG Program is to prevent the introduction of excessive amounts of fats, oils, and grease into the city's wastewater collection system in amounts that, along or in combination with other discharges, have the potential to disrupt flows in the system or cause interference and pass through to the City's wastewater reclamation facility.

Fruita Municipal Code Chapter 13.24 - Sewer Service Regulations - states, "The City Council shall make and enforce such rules and regulations as it may deem necessary for the safe, efficient and economical management of the city sewer system. Such rules and regulations, when not repugnant to this code or any other ordinances of the city and the laws of the state shall have the same force and effect as ordinances of the city."

Public Works staff will use a multi-pronged approach in rolling out the rules and regulations and this program is not intended to be a heavy-handed regulatory program. However, this program will require permitting and enforcement actions if compliance isn't met. This program will be managed out of the Sewer Fund with the employees at the Wastewater Reclamation Facility and coordinated with the Building Department where necessary.

Public Works staff will perform regularly scheduled inspections for compliance with the FOG Management Program Rules and Regulations. City staff will work with local businesses on their reporting and will provide educational material to be displayed in their kitchens. Together with our local businesses and food service providers, we can better protect the city's infrastructure and protect the public.