



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
**NEWS**

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## **NJDOT assures public that Seaside plume was not sewage Uncommon occurrence the result of silt buildup and disruption**

**(Trenton)** – New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Commissioner Jamie Fox today assured the public that the plume last week from the 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue pump station in Seaside Park was not sewage or pollution of any kind.

“I need to be crystal clear on this, the water coming from the pump on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue was most certainly not sewage,” Fox said. “The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Ocean County both tested the water and found it safe. The public’s health and safety is always our first concern.”

NJDOT’s Route 35 Reconstruction Project is not yet complete. While the reconstruction of the highway is nearly done, there is ongoing work on the drainage system and pump stations, as well as landscaping that needs to be completed.

The Department investigated the cause of the plume to ensure everything is operating properly and found it was a combination of silt built up in the system from the months of construction activity in the area and silt from the bay floor that was turned up by the force of the water exiting the outfall pipe. DEP and Ocean County tested the water and preliminary results have found that the water is safe (no increased levels of bacteria etc.).

The Department is in the process of cleaning manholes and pipe joints and applying hydro-cement to ensure there are no leaks in the system. While this work is ongoing, the drainage system and pump stations remain operational. As we seal and inspect the system, some water is still being cleared from the pumps throughout the day, much like a basement sump pump. Once the pipe sealing is complete, the pumps should run less frequently. In addition, the Department also will be laying a broken stone/concrete matting on the bay floor to prevent the bay bottom from being disturbed.

“The new underground storm water drainage system is a tremendous enhancement over what existed prior to this project,” Fox said. “This system is designed to handle 25-year storms, while the previous drainage could only handle 2-year storms. It is important for everyone to remember that we are still working on the system. As we continue to work on the system there is a possibility more silt is turned up, but we can ensure that there is no impact to the Bay or the public, and that this is not dangerous.”

Anyone who lives in the area can tell you that the flooding on the roads has been greatly reduced with the new system, even though it is still being completed. NJDOT has received very positive feedback on how successful the system has been this summer in reducing flooding.

To help reduce runoff pollution to the Barnegat Bay, the new drainage system includes 76 manufactured treatment devices, or MTDs, that separate trash, oils, and sediment out of the water before it flows to the bay. This is the first time runoff into the bay will be filtered and cleaned, improving the quality of water discharged into the bay.

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