

January 30, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Harbour Way effluent lift station overflow

Sechelt, BC – On Friday January 25th the effluent lift station at the foot of Harbour Way in West Porpoise Bay had a pump failure and effluent spill. The station is currently operating effectively and the spill was contained by Sechelt staff and Startek Industrial Services. It is estimated that no more than 10 m³ of effluent may have spilled into the ocean.

On January 25th at approximately 10 am a citizen reported a problem with the Harbour Way lift station. A Sechelt technician arrived onsite at 10:30 am and found that there was no power to the pumps. The alarm system in the lift station was not triggered to alert Sechelt staff. Staff used a gravel barrier to prevent the overflow from entering the ocean. Startek Industrial arrived onsite at 11 am to pump out the station and assist with clean up. Olson Electric was called to repair the electrical issue and determine the cause of the power failure.

Olson confirmed that a failed relay caused the power failure. Bypassing this relay restored full function to the lift station. The pumps and alarms were tested following the bypass and are now operating effectively.

The pumping systems are equipped with an alarm that will trigger in the event of an equipment failure, however the equipment did not trigger the alarm in this case due to the failure of this relay. The pumps and alarm were working properly when they were inspected the day before the spill, Thursday January 24th. All lift stations are inspected daily in the District of Sechelt.

The spill has been reported to Fisheries and Oceans Canada. District of Sechelt staff are conducting an in-depth assessment of all lift stations to prevent a future occurrence. Christine Miller, supervisor, Water Resource Centre stated, “equipment failure can happen, even with a diligent maintenance program, but staff responded quickly and contained the overflow as much as possible.”

The Harbour Way lift station is a pump station that moves effluent from the area up to the Water Resource Centre for treatment. It is equipped with two pumps and an alarm system. It is also equipped with a generator in case of total power outage.

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News Release