How the NBP EMS Program Benefitted Camden County, NJ Municipal Utility Authority

The **Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority** (CCMUA) operates an 80 million gallon per day wastewater treatment plant in Camden City, NJ, one of the poorest cities in the nation. The wastewater treatment plant discharges to the Delaware River and is located within 100 yards of a residential neighborhood.

In the late 1990's, the CCMUA had been experiencing problems with permit compliance, numerous odor complaints that culminated in multi-million dollar lawsuits from both the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and local community groups, and a 22% rate increase. In response, the CCMUA decided in 2000 to implement an Environmental Management System (EMS) in order to (1) improve environmental performance, (2) minimize adverse impact to residential neighborhoods and (3) optimize cost efficiencies.

Since implementation of its EMS, the CCMUA has realized significant improvements in its performance. Specifically, it increased solids capture at the treatment plant by over 25% resulting in a significant improvement to the plant's effluent quality and a corresponding improvement to the water quality of its zone of the Delaware River. This was one of the chief reasons that the Delaware River Basin Commission honored the CCMUA in 2009 as the top municipal utility in the Delaware River Basin, a marked improvement over the days when it struggled to meet its effluent permit.

In addition, the CCMUA has invested over $50 million in additional equipment to improve odor control performance. As a result, while the CCMUA had 16 NJDEP odor violations in 1998 alone, it has had only 4 violations since 2000. Moreover, the CCMUA has undertaken an extensive community outreach program in order to try to rebuild the relationship with its neighbors. This has included building new parks in the neighborhood and partnering with community groups to improve the quality of life in the adjacent neighborhood.

Finally, the CCMUA has accomplished all this while achieving a significant improvement in cost efficiency. Specifically, the CCMUA has been able to improve operational efficiency, through upgraded equipment and more stringently enforced internal

procedures, to hold its rate for the past 15 years. In fact, the CCMUA has actually been able to lower its rate so that it is now lower than it was in 1996.

The CCMUA's Environmental Management System enabled it to identify its core objectives---environmental performance, odor control and cost efficiency, and direct and focus its internal wherewithal toward meeting those goals to the maximal extent possible. The CCMUA then sought certification from the National Biosolids Partnership in order to signal its commitment to maintain these high environmental, social and financial goals on a continual basis, for the benefit of its neighbors, ratepayers and the environment. The CCMUA obtained this prestigious national certification in September 2010 and signed up for a full annual auditing program in order to ensure that it sustains its environmental, social and economic performance on an ongoing basis.