



**For Immediate Release
March 23, 2023**

Contact: Ray Clarke, County Engineer
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Sewage Discharge to Drainage Ditch along Royal Oak Road (MD Route 329)

On Wednesday, March 22, 2023, at approximately 11:00 a.m., the Talbot County Sanitary District (Sanitary District) was alerted to a sewer spill along Royal Oak Road (MD Route 329) across from The Oaks. The spill occurred as the result of a contractor boring under Royal Oak Road inadvertently hitting the lateral connected to the force main. Staff from the Sanitary District responded to the site and immediately contacted Retallack & Sons to repair the force main. The leak was repaired at 2:00 p.m.

At approximately 11:30 a.m., CHT Excavating arrived at the location of the spill, and assisted the Sanitary District in cleaning up the area. CHT Excavating's pumper truck was positioned at the Royal Oak Pump station at the corner of Maryland Route 329 and Bellevue Road to manage the wastewater flows entering Royal Oak Pump Station #2. CHT also stationed a tanker truck at the site of the leak to clean up the immediate area. Staff from the Sanitary District reported approximately 4,000 gallons of raw sewage were discharged from the force main with 3,000 gallons recovered by the tanker truck. Approximately 1,000 gallons of raw sewage entered Oak Creek.

The sewage discharge was immediately reported to the Maryland Department of the Environment. A Talbot County Environmental Health representative responded and arrived at the incident at approximately 11:30 a.m. and confirmed the discharge of untreated sewage from the force main to the roadside drainage ditch as noted above. Confirming some sewage flow was discharging to Oak Creek, Environmental Health directed the placement of sandbags in two (2) locations in the ditch to block sewage from continuing to flow to the creek. Following the blocking of the ditch, sewage pumping continued by CHT and Sullivan Septic Service. Following the sewage pumping, personnel from the Sanitary District were advised to spread lime the entire length of the affected drainage ditch to kill any pathogens present from the wastewater discharge. The investigation of the discharge determined that sewage did reach navigable or shellfish harvesting waters of the State of Maryland. However, based on the limited amount of sewage that discharged to the creek, as well as the ability of the grasses and soils located within the drainage way to filter and attenuate the wastewater, the Office of Environmental Health determined that there was low to minimal impact to the public health and the environment.

At approximately 2:00 p.m., Retallack and Sons, Inc. completed the repair to the force main and started to restore the disturbed areas in the location of the excavation.



If the public has any questions regarding the public health determination they may contact Anne Morse, Director of Environmental Health, at 410-770-6880 Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or after hours by contacting the Talbot County Operations Center at 410-822-0095. The Operations Center will contact the Environmental Health Specialist on call. If the public has questions regarding the discharge or the corrective action that was taken they may contact Ray Clarke, County Engineer, at 410-770-8170.