

# Oakland-Macomb Interceptor Officially Changes Hands

October 22, 2009

It's official. The Oakland-Macomb Interceptor (OMI), once the property of the City of Detroit, will now be operated by a newly created legal entity comprised of the Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner, the Macomb County Public Works Commissioner and the director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

The Oakland-Macomb Interceptor, a length of subterranean pipe, is about 21 miles long from Eight Mile Road east of Van Dyke in Warren to an area near Dequindre and 23 Mile Road in Rochester Hills. It was the only part of the system outside of the Detroit city limits that was controlled by the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD). Similar interceptors, that border Detroit in Oakland and Wayne counties, are controlled by those counties.

The official closing, which occurred today (October 22, 2009) in Detroit, concludes long-standing negotiations between the City and Oakland and Macomb counties. The transfer of ownership represents a major feature of a global settlement reached in December, 2008 between the City of Detroit and the counties of Macomb, Oakland and Wayne.

The OMI is a portion of an existing sewer system that was built in the early 1970s by the DWSD. The system is comprised of three major interceptors: Edison Corridor, Oakland Arm and Avon Arm. This entire system is the sole conduit to transport sewage to the DWSD wastewater treatment facility that serves more than 830,000 people in several Oakland and Macomb communities.

The interceptor is in need of significant repairs. Studies conducted on the cost of repairs put them in the \$160 million range, but Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner John P. McCulloch said he had been eagerly awaiting the closing because it represents major step toward a more efficient administration at a reduced cost to customers.

“As I've said before, there is great value in transferring the OMI to the counties because the counties will direct and oversee the operation of the OMI along with the rehabilitation work.”

McCulloch also praised DWSD Director Pam Turner noting that the closing “represents a new era in cooperation and that will benefit all of us.”

He added that “along with our personal stake in the maintenance and operation, Macomb and Oakland not only share responsibility, but now we control our own destiny. We set

the priorities and we decide how best to serve our constituents. In short, the people most impacted will have the greatest voice.”

After rehabilitation, the interceptor is expected to have a 20-year lifespan. Rehabilitation efforts are expected to be completed over a five-year time frame, beginning this year and concluding in late 2013.