

**Marion County Florida Board of Commissions**  
**Meeting Date: December 17, 2024**

As residents of the Oak Run community locate off Highway 200-west Ocala Florida, we are seeking resolution and clarification to an ongoing environmental concern and expansion of the Waste Management Treatment Facility located at 11400 SE 90<sup>th</sup> Terrace, Ocala Florida 34482. This facility's physical location is in close proximity to Oak Run homes and has negatively impacted numerous residences by frequently emitting putrid odors which seep into our homes and throughout multiple neighborhoods. During these episodes homeowners are unable to enjoy outdoor activities and not able to open their windows to enjoy cooler temperatures. In addition, there are several locations down the main boulevard, around recreational areas and in and around clubs/restaurant that emit a strong offensive raw sewage odor. This odors frequency has increased over the past years and periodically intensify to unacceptable levels. The odor escalates during changing weather conditions, elevated humidity, cooler and hotter temperatures (high humidity) and during heavy precipitation. This facility continues to produce unfavorable air quality and negative impacts to people's quality of life, environment degradation and decline to property values.

**Factors to consider:** Despite advance waste water treatment advancements, the risk of dangerous pathogens released into the air and environment allows pathogens to escape or seep into the environment which can pose significant health threats such as airborne and waterborne diseases.

Recently information that Marion County plans to expand this facilities intake by connecting newly developed communities which will add hundreds if not thousands of new residents, increasing the flow of solid waste to this facility, coupled with the ongoing unresolved problems creates a real concern within the community. The increased waste flow to this facility has already produced negative environmental issues to the people living in and around the facility. This facility and connected sewage lines, series of release valves, filters, pumping/lift stations, and lack of sedimentation tank covers have created poor air quality and declined quality of life, decrease property values and inflict unwanted discomfort to residents and exposure to potential harmful environmental contaminates.

Solid Waste Management Facilities have been shown to lead to the degradation of the surrounding water and soil environments, and its collection, processing and transportation are key components to poor air quality, odors and dust. A major impact factor to consider is the close proximity of this facility to the Oak Run neighborhoods inhabited by senior of citizens the most vulnerable in society.

Maintaining a sewage system requires regular inspections, prompt repairs, identify blockages, controlling gas accumulation and leaks in a timely manner to reduce/prevent more significant issues, such as Oak Run has endured for years. This aging facility and sewage infrastructure are of real concern and stress to the community. In addition, dangerous pathogens such as fungal, bacteria, viruses and parasites associated with waste water management facilities can be released into the air and environment from leaks, purges and facility malfunctions.

No waste Water Management Treatment Facility, even if efficiently operated can completely eliminate all pathogens even under the most stringent operational management standards.

**History:** There has been an ongoing problem with the this Waste Management Facility in excess *seventeen years* with little to intermittent improvements. Countless complaints over the years to Marion County Utilities and County Commissioners offices, yielded some resolution decreasing noise pollution, but not eliminating noise disturbance and has not improved the offensive odors.


Countless explanations given and promises for improvements from future plans to upgrade the facility have not come to fruition.

**Notable:** The weather conditions intensify odors. Temperature inversions, and wind directions all are contributing factors to odor emission drift and odor duration lingering and penetrating into homes causing respiratory irritations and bad taste sensations. We believe the most immediate issue is to identify all potential areas that could be sources of the odors to prevent future diffusion of odor vapors and dangerous pathogens being released. Research revealed many wastewater treatment facilities *have sealed the source of odors*, whether a tank, basin, or lagoon with an industrial grade cover. (Oak Run has only one tank sealed.)

**Request:** Diagnose, detect and repair or replace aging or malfunctioning components which cause disruption to normal operation and emit putrid odors into the community. Inspect and replace any aging or degrading infrastructure/sewage flow pipes, pump/lift stations, malfunctioning air release valves which purge a putrid odor from untreated raw sewage flowing to the facility and through our community. Please consider postponement of future planned additions to connect other communities until the current problems are identified and resolved. In addition, due to the prolonged occurrences we respectfully request that an environmental impact study be preformed, testing to waste water leach field and surrounding areas/properties, properties that use the water byproduct reclaimed used for irrigation, test wells, air quality and other water sources to ensure no contaminants from this facility are present. Reduction in noise disruption created from the facility's daily operation or erect a noise barrier to insulate neighborhoods.

### Questions

1. What is the load capacity of this facility in terms of population and what level are we currently?
2. Is this facility rated as an A-B-C type facility?
3. What expansion planned are projected for development of this facility?
4. How many communities/business are projected to be added to this facility?
5. What engineering upgrades or expansions have been developed to address the aging facility and infrastructures and to address the ongoing issues?
6. Where are the entry connections for outside communities/business located that connect to the main intake flow to this facility?
7. Why is there not a technician on duty 24/7?
8. How many pump/lift stations in Oak Run and adjacent areas are there?
9. Is the Waste Water Facility and Pumps/Lift stations remotely monitored using SCADA (Supervisory Control Data Acquisition) system by Utility Company technician 24/7?
10. How often are the pump/lift station professional cleaned/vacuumed, debris removed, jetted then chemically treated?
11. How many purge valves are there within Oak Run and where are their locations?



In advance thank you for your time and we hope and pray your success and find resolution swiftly.

