

**The Persistent Problem of Grease** (LILWA Press Release, July 2004)

For approximately a year and a half, our industry has been dealing with an ever worsening problem regarding the disposal of waste grease from restaurants, institutions, and other commercial / industrial producers of the material. In a nutshell, the problem is that although the technology exists, Suffolk County does not currently have facilities that can process and safely dispose of the volume of waste grease that is now being generated. Their solution to the problem has been to simply stop accepting the material at their Bergen Point treatment plant. Smaller municipal and private facilities have followed suit.

With no place to dispose of the grease, Suffolk County septic system service companies have begun trucking the material off the island, at considerable expense, and passing the transportation costs along to their customers. This has given rise to a number of serious problems.

Certainly, among the most most serious consequences of this situation is the problem of illegal dumping of raw sewage in various places around Long Island. Evidence of the illegal dumping is beginning to show up in secluded areas, woods, beaches and even in the groundwater. Grease laden sewage has also been dumped into the septic systems of shopping centers, businesses, buildings under construction private residences, as well. Left unchecked, the cleanup costs generated by the illegal practice figure to be astronomical.

Adding to the crisis is the fact that the Passaic River plant has recently closed it's doors to waste grease from Long Island and the material is now being trucked to plants in northern Virginia and upstate New York, on the Canadian border. Obviously, the cost of shipping the sludge hundreds of miles for disposal is adding substantial costs to an already overburdened industry and in the opinion of many operators, it is becoming prohibitive. If it continues, these companies will simply stop servicing the grease traps, leaving their customers with no alternative but to turn to the illegal dumpers. In that case, the area faces a potential ecological and economic disaster of immense proportions.

This Association (LILWA) has been calling on county and state officials, industries and business who generate the grease to sit down with us to work out a solution. More often than not, they don't respond and when they do, the problem has receives little more than lip-service. However, it is quickly becoming obvious that shipping the problem off the island is not working and government and industry can no longer turn a blind eye to it. We have to come to grips with the fact that our infrastructure is not adequate to deal with the rapid growth of eastern Long Island and adopt rational policies to deal with it.