



Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

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February 4, 2004

**Bureau of Water Supply
and Wastewater Management**

717-787-8184

To All Sewage Enforcement Officers:

The purpose of this letter is to advise you of important developments concerning Sewage Enforcement Officer (SEO) continuing education.

On February 28, 2003, I wrote you a letter explaining that a settlement had been reached involving an appeal to the charging of registration fees by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for SEO continuing education. Unfortunately, the parties disagreed on the interpretation of the settlement language and renegotiation of the settlement has been ongoing since we heard of the disagreement. At issue now, among other things, is whether DEP, as a result of the original settlement language, is able to give SEO continuing education credits for the 2003 PASEO Conference.

As most of you know, the Pennsylvania Association of Sewage Enforcement Officers (PASEO) filed the initial appeal against DEP. The original settlement language, as agreed to by both parties, resolved the appeal and prohibits any fees for any DEP-sponsored SEO training. DEP-sponsored SEO training is training that has been approved by DEP for continuing education credits. PASEO rejected that interpretation of the settlement. Apparently, PASEO would like to be able to conduct SEO training and charge fees, while prohibiting DEP or any other entity providing DEP-sponsored training from doing the same. In fact it is DEP's position that PASEO has, in effect, been charging fees for training at its annual conferences. An SEO must register and pay the conference fee to attend the technical workshops. As a compromise of the recent disagreement, DEP has offered to limit "fees for training" to direct training costs such as course development and instructor salaries/expenses. A training provider such as DEP or PASEO could not charge a fee for training, but could still recoup incidental training-related costs such as room rental and lunches/breaks through fees. PASEO is rejecting this compromise as well. Consequently, a timely resolution of the issue does not appear likely at this time.

The continued delay in reaching a final settlement with PASEO has likewise delayed DEP's granting of credit hours for the 2003 conference. We realize that many of you have been anticipating that credit hours earned for the 2003 conference would count toward your continuing education credits for the current certification cycle (2002 - 2004). An SEO could earn up to seven (7) credit hours for participating in the conference sessions and workshops. Not having those credit hours may place some of you in jeopardy of lapsing your SEO certification since it may not be possible for you to earn enough credit hours by June 30 through currently available DEP sponsored training.



SINCE WE DO NOT WISH TO JEOPARDIZE ANY SEO'S CERTIFICATION BECAUSE OF THE CURRENT STALLED NEGOTIATIONS WITH PASEO, DEP HAS DECIDED TO GRANT EARNED CREDIT HOURS FOR THE 2003 PASEO CONFERENCE INDEPENDENT OF THE ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS.

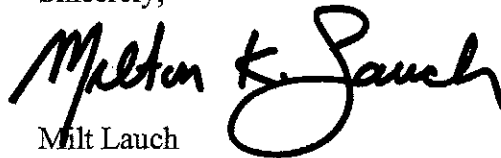
The earned credit hours will be granted provided that PASEO is able to verify attendance at the various conference sessions and workshops by official roster for each approved session. Once PASEO provides the appropriate conference roster information, each individual SEO's credit hours for the conference will be calculated and added to his or her total credits for this cycle. Remember, extra credit hours (up to 15 hours) will be carried over to the next certification cycle.

PLEASE NOTE: CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDIT HOURS WILL BE GRANTED FOR THE 2003 PASEO CONFERENCE ONLY! APPROVAL FOR THE 2004 PASEO CONFERENCE HAS NOT BEEN GIVEN AND SHOULD NOT BE ANTICIPATED!

Additionally, we would like to clarify another training-related issue. If you are planning to utilize Web-based training courses to obtain continuing education credits for the current certification cycle, credit hours are given one time only for each Web course. You can retake any web course for review purposes, but you will not be given additional credit hours. SEOs may retake classroom courses for credit except that a course may not be taken twice in the same certification cycle.

Finally, the SEO Certification Board has asked us to remind SEOs that the current certification cycle ends June 30, 2004. All continuing education courses must be taken and your completed renewal application must be sent to the Board Secretary by June 14, 2004 in order to ensure receipt of your new pocket/validation cards by the beginning of the new certification cycle.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Milt Lauch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "L" and "C".

Milt Lauch
Chief

Division of Wastewater Management

bcc: Code 20.6.7
Water Management
Mr. Mather
Mr. Lauch
Mr. Africa
Mr. Novinger
Mr. Dudley, SERO
Mr. Brunamonti, NERO
Mr. Corriveau, SERO
Mr. Metzger, NCRO
Mr. Bolta, SWRO
Mr. Zimmerman, NWRO
File
30 Day File

ML:JA:ses