

NEWS RELEASE

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Large-Scale Pump and Haul Requests for New Construction on Hold as Board Ponders Ordinance

During its April 16, 2024, meeting, the Loudoun Board of Supervisors adopted an [interim policy that will not permit the approval of large-scale pump and haul systems](#) that serve new construction until a new resolution or ordinance regulating those systems has been adopted. The Board's action is in response to an increase in the number of pump and haul requests for large-scale operations and addresses concerns about environmental risks associated with them. The adopted interim policy excludes low-volume temporary pump and haul applications for new construction with sewage volume of less or equal to 1,000 gallons per day.

What is a Pump and Haul System?

Pump and haul systems are used when an existing sewage system has failed or is not available. They can be used for residential or commercial properties. Wastewater is stored in a tank until a truck can remove it and haul it to a wastewater treatment facility.

Such requests are permitted under the [Virginia Administrative Code](#). Loudoun has approved 95 permanent pump and haul applications over the years, compared to 12 in Fairfax County, five in Prince William County and two in Clarke County. Fairfax and Clarke counties do not allow the use of permanent pump and haul operations for new construction.

The state permits three types of pump and haul systems:

- **Emergency:** Approval less than 12 months when an existing on-site sewage system has malfunctioned and is being repaired.
- **Temporary:** Approval for less than 12 months for construction and connection to an on-site sewage system or sewage treatment plant.
- **Permanent:** Approval for more than 12 months.

The Loudoun Health Department can issue emergency and temporary pump and haul approvals, while the Board of Supervisors must approve permanent pump and haul systems.

Rise in Large-Scale Requests

Historically, the Loudoun Board has typically approved applications for permanent pump and haul systems where public infrastructure is imminent, and with relatively low sewage volume of

between 750 and 1,500 gallons of wastewater output per week, or in instances where an existing onsite system has failed and there is no alternate repair or replacement option. The County has received applications with volumes as high as 420,000 gallons per week.

Environmental Risks

Properly installed permanent pump and haul systems still pose an environmental risk based on multiple points of potential failure. There is the potential for overflow if there is a surge in volume or if the system alarm fails.

In addition, hauling wastewater presents a spill risk that increases with volume. For example, a 420,000-gallon per week system could require as many as 118 pump truck visits per week.

Permanent pump and haul operations are only intended as a last resort method to address an existing public health risk. County staff has consistently recommended that construction approvals should align with the pace of utility infrastructure development to prevent development from outpacing infrastructure availability. The pending permanent pump and haul applications to serve new construction do not address public health risks and are not supported by the wastewater policies of the 2019 Comprehensive Plan.

More Information

For more information about wells and onsite septic systems, as well as the permit guidelines for an emergency pump and haul, visit the [county's website](#).

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