



Scranton, PA

From Chronic Violations to Sustained Environmental Compliance

In Scranton, Pennsylvania, a municipal wastewater system faced long-standing regulatory, operational and financial challenges that required a sustainable path forward.

Long-Standing Compliance and Financial Challenges

The Scranton Sewer Authority (SSA) operated a combined sewer system serving approximately 31,000 customers in Scranton and Dunmore. In 2013, SSA entered into a Consent Order and Long-Term Control Plan (LTCP) with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The agreement mandated \$140 million in system upgrades to achieve environmental compliance.

Under the agreement, SSA historically faced financial penalties for a number of violations ranging from reporting failures and air quality violations to effluent exceedances and dry weather overflows. Over the years, SSA paid hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines.

	Under SSA 2001 – 2016	Under Pennsylvania American Water 2017 – 2025
EPA Violations	15+	0
Fines	\$375,619	\$0

A Complex Infrastructure and Maintenance Burden

The LTCP established a 25-year program of nearly 60 combined sewer overflow (CSO) improvement projects designed to control and significantly reduce wastewater discharges into the Lackawanna River and its tributaries. SSA often struggled with routine maintenance requirements outlined in the Consent Order. Lack of proper equipment, training, and a reactive response to improvements caused cleaning and inspection of catch basins and sewer lines to fall behind established goals.

The size and scope of the system, its environmental obligations and its history of penalties underscored the need for a long-term solution. Partnership with a regulated, private provider can offer a practical path forward. They can bring the capital resources, technical expertise, economies of scale, specialized technical expertise and regulatory experience needed to modernize infrastructure and strengthen operations.

Investment, Expertise and Accountability in Action

In December 2016, that partnership model was put into practice when Pennsylvania American Water acquired SSA's wastewater system assets. All 80 SSA employees joined the new provider, and because they were already the water service provider in Scranton and Dunmore, it could build on an established local presence while bringing additional technical and financial capacity to the wastewater system.

Following the acquisition, Pennsylvania American Water assumed responsibility for the Consent Order and LTCP, completing all projects outlined in the first phase and accelerating second phase projects ahead of schedule.

Using extensive hydraulic modeling and multi-sensor investigation technology, it improved upon the Consent Order's mandated CSO reduction by nearly 30 percent across the first two phases of the LTCP, which were completed one year ahead of schedule. Work has begun on the third phase to achieve further CSO reductions. It launched a capital plan to address system deficiencies, invested in new equipment, technology and training programs to comply with Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards, and drew on expertise in geographic information systems, engineering and external resources to improve project delivery. **Since the acquisition, more than \$255 million has been invested in the system.**



More than \$8 million is being invested in the Scranton wastewater treatment plant headworks to improve performance and reliability.

Measurable Environmental Results

The results extended beyond project delivery. In early 2018, the Scranton Wastewater Operations team met with representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to review 2017 operations. For the first time, Scranton Wastewater faced no penalties for the prior year's operations. Since the acquisition, the system has passed multiple inspections covering air quality, laboratory standards and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permitting without receiving a single Notice of Violation.

Scranton's experience demonstrates how partnership with a regulated, private provider can help a community move from chronic violations and deferred system needs toward sustained investment, stronger environmental performance and safe, reliable and sustainable wastewater service.

INVESTMENT IN SCRANTON WASTEWATER	
Year	Investment
2016	\$12,162.64
2017	\$26,871,909.36
2018	\$17,494,671.36
2019	\$28,614,030.15
2020	\$25,882,919.23
2021	\$22,462,582.98
2022	\$29,253,942.46
2023	\$60,292,488.20
2024	\$44,999,763.43
Total	\$255,884,469.81



Zero Notices of Violation (NOV) and accomplished compliance with Consent Order and LTCP deadlines



Replaced more than 19,000 feet of wastewater main, including numerous manholes and catch basins



Completed survey, assessment and geographic information system mapping of entire collection system



Established a culture of safety with employees, resulting in no recordable injuries for more than 650 days



A 120,000-gallon equalization system was installed to substantially reduce combined sewer overflows into the Lackawanna River. This is one of over 60 CSO reduction projects completed as part of the LTCP.



Hydraulic capacity and treatment improvements were completed in 2020 to increase plant capacity and provide enhanced wastewater treatment prior to discharge into the Lackawanna River. In 2021 and 2022, the company rebuilt the headworks facility, removing the chlorine gas disinfection process and rebuilding the facility's sludge handling process.



Currently, \$30 million in plant improvements have been completed or are underway. The company plans to invest another \$10 million in upgrades over the next five years.