Wastewater Treatment Plant Extension Underway

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Topics: Wastewater | Pollutants

100 of the more than 700 Swiss wastewater treatment plants can be upgraded for the elimination of micropollutants, thanks to the positive decision of the Federal council. Eawag is in the midst of this major project. Together with the ARA wastewater treatment plant in Dübendorf, Eawag is doing pioneer work, and together with the Swiss Water Association it ensures continuing information exchange.

Micropollutants are organic trace substances such as medications, body care products and plant and material protective agents. They are present in the environment in very small concentrations. Most of these micropollutants enter surface waters in wastewater. Investigations (Strategy Micropoll project) have shown that with an additional treatment of already cleaned wastewater with ozone or powdered active charcoal in the wastewater treatment plants, the pollutants in surface waters can be reduced by at least 80%.

Amendment to the Swiss Water Protection Law in the Council of States and the National Council

It is estimated that the upgrading of 100 of the ca. 700 Swiss wastewater treatment plants will mean an investment of approx. 1.2 billion Swiss francs (CHF). Following the Council of States (39:1), the National Council also voted (137 to 55) on 3 March 2014 to amend the Swiss Water Protection Law (German text of the final vote on 21 March 2014; pdf). The financing will be paid for by a nationwide “polluter pays” wastewater tax. The tax of max. CHF 9 per person and year will be collected until 2040. It should finance 75% of the investment costs.

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The First Fully Technical Ozonation goes into Service

The ARA wastewater treatment plant in Dübendorf is the first to introduce fully technical ozonation. The official start will take place on 6 September 2014 as part of the “ARA Open House “. Eawag will provide scientific support in coming months. These results and early operating experience will be presented as part of a Swiss Water Association course (7/14 November 2014).

Swiss Water Association Micropollutants Process Engineering Platform

In the hearings concerning the amendment of the Water Protection Law, one of the stipulations made was the creation of a national platform. This platform is responsible for making information available about the process of removing micropollutants in wastewater treatment plants as well as clearing up unanswered questions. The “micropollutants process engineering working group” was founded and joined the wastewater treatment competence centre of the Swiss Water Association.

The coordination of this platform will be transferred from Christian Abegglen to Pascal Wunderlin as of April. Pascal Wunderlin has written a dissertation on the theme of laughing gas (N20) emissions in biological wastewater treatment while working at Eawag in the Process Engineering Department (under Hansruedi Siegrist and Adriano Joss). In addition to his duties as platform coordinator, he will continue as a post-doc with research projects in the Process Engineering Department.

Further Information

FOEN
Swiss Water Association Micropollutants Process Engineering Platform

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https://www.eawag.ch/en/info/portal/news/news-archive/archive-detail/wastewater-treatment-plant-extension-underway