

NEWEA Position Paper

# Blending Policy—A Viable Environmental Tool During Peak Wet Weather Conditions

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by the New England Water Environment Association*

## **The merits and shortcomings of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s wet weather blending policy continue to be debated in the governmental and environmental arenas,**

with those on both sides of the issue appearing entrenched in their positions. Leaders of environmental organizations, members of the U.S. Congress, U.S. EPA technical staff, and wastewater treatment professionals have all voiced strong opinions on the environmental science and the technical, economic, public health, and emotional issues related to the blending policy. NEWEA, which represents wastewater and environmental professionals throughout New England and is dedicated to improving and protecting New England’s water resources, supports blending during high flow conditions as a reasonable policy for balancing the need for satisfactory water quality with the necessity for a realistic appraisal of treatment capabilities during demanding wet weather conditions.

NEWEA agrees with U.S. EPA that using blending as a treatment option during peak flow wet weather conditions will not derail national or state goals and requirements for the treatment of all sanitary sewer overflows. The policy would clarify the practice of blending and provide needed guidance, while setting a clear framework that would eliminate inconsistent approaches to blending among U.S. EPA regions. This inconsistency has resulted in decision making on a case-by-case basis, rather than in accordance with national standards.

NEWEA’s position is that the blending policy, as proposed by U.S. EPA, is not “backsliding” and provides a reasonable means of maintaining overall water quality in a manner that balances technical capabilities, environmental goals, and economic resources.



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