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GRN Files Motion for Summary Judgment in Hattiesburg Sewage Case

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By Erin Lowrey, Community Manager - [email](#)

HATTIESBURG, MS (WDAM) - **This is a news release from Gulf Restoration Network**

On Tuesday, January 7th, Gulf Restoration Network, through its attorneys at the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic, filed a Motion for Summary Judgment in Federal Court in the Southern District of Mississippi in support of GRN's Clean Water Act Citizen Suit against the City of Hattiesburg, MS for sewage discharge violations that pollute the Bouie and Leaf Rivers. The suit was originally filed in March of 2012.

"For the last 20 years, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality has let the city of Hattiesburg violate its sewage discharge permits," said Andrew Whitehurst, Water Policy Director for GRN. "It's well past time for the city to live up to its obligations and ensure that local waters and communities are protected from pollution."

The Motion asks Federal District Judge Keith Starrett to rule that the City is liable for 5,464 days of violations of its sewage discharge permit limits and to schedule a hearing and oral arguments on the matter. According to the Clean Water Act, these violations carry daily fines.

Evidence to support the motion includes the City's own Discharge Monitoring Reports, which are certified documents that must be sent each month to the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). Gulf Restoration Network collected a series of these reports for evidence by searching MDEQ files for the years 2007 to 2013.

"The city's own records clearly show thousands of violations of pollution standards, including for fecal coliform bacteria, biological oxygen demand, and total suspended solids," stated Mr. Whitehurst. "Local communities are tired of dealing with the foul air from these sewage treatment facilities and the pollution in the Bouie and Leaf Rivers. And ultimately, the city's mismanagement of its sewage affects downstream communities, as pollution from the city flows from these rivers into the Pascagoula and out to the Mississippi Sound."

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