



# COMMON GROUND'S INVESTIGATION REPORT: 20 Whistleblowers Expose MMSD's and Veolia's Mismanagement of Milwaukee's Wastewater Treatment Facilities

June 11, 2026

## Background

In September of 2023, Common Ground received an anonymous letter from a former MMSD employee asking us to investigate the mismanagement of the wastewater treatment facilities by Veolia, an international, for-profit company based in Paris, France. The author asserted that Veolia is not running the facilities at capacity during rainstorms and thus needless amounts of wastewater are being dumped into Lake Michigan or backed up into basements.

In 2023, Common Ground did not have capacity to follow up on the letter because we were running a major campaign to reform the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM). However, by the fall of 2025, Common Ground formed a Water Team and began investigating the whistleblower's claims.

On April 30th, after talking with many experts, stakeholders, and current and former Veolia and MMSD employees, we had enough evidence to go public and call for an independent, third-party performance audit of Veolia's management practices and the supervision of Veolia by MMSD. Since then more whistleblowers have come forward.

Common Ground is a powerful non-profit, non-partisan alliance of 45 congregations, schools, non-profits, small businesses and neighborhood groups with a 18-year history of effectively addressing critical social issues in Southeastern Wisconsin.

## This Report

We have talked individually with 30 current and former MMSD and Veolia employees who have confirmed and expanded the assertions made in the original whistleblower letter. Twenty of these individuals provided enough information for us to include them in this report—seven are listing their name publicly. Common Ground put in writing the evidence we have gathered, which documents numerous areas of concern and the serious nature of the mismanagement practices we have uncovered:

- 1) **FALSIFIED EQUIPMENT RECORDS:** Equipment is not being properly maintained and maintenance records and work orders are being falsified or deleted.

- 2) **FACILITIES BELOW CAPACITY:** Equipment is being allowed to deteriorate and fail; thus facilities cannot operate at peak capacity even during rain storms when it's most needed.
- 3) **FALSIFIED WATER REPORTS:** Water quality reports are being falsified. Milorganite quality control reports are also being "fudged." Veolia has reduced testing for PCBs in Milorganite to save money.
- 4) **SEWAGE DUMPS INACCURATE:** The amount of sewage being dumped into the lake or diverted into the Deep Tunnel is not being reported accurately.
- 5) **UNSAFE CONDITIONS:** Workers are made to endure unsafe working conditions.
- 6) **LOW, UNQUALIFIED STAFFING:** Proper staffing levels are not being maintained. Unqualified persons are employed, compromising safety and efficiency.
- 7) **NO OVERSIGHT:** MMSD staff are not properly monitoring Veolia's management of the facilities.

This report is organized around the testimony of each individual that has come forward, either publicly or confidentially. Common Ground's goal is to offer a true picture of Veolia's mismanagement practices taking place in the MMSD facilities and the inadequate oversight by MMSD staff. Many of these Whistleblowers are willing to speak to performance auditors in a confidential setting.

#### **Whistleblower #1 – Steve Jacquart**

Steve wrote the original, anonymous letter to Common Ground and eventually identified himself to us as we began the investigation. Steve worked for MMSD for 19 years as the Director of Intergovernmental Relations. He reported to the Executive Director of MMSD. On April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026 Steve appeared publicly at a meeting of 177 Common Ground leaders to offer the [testimony](#) found in Appendix A.

Steve's focus is on the publicly available documents that verify that **the plants are not running at peak efficiency** and that **needless amounts of sewage are being dumped into Lake Michigan** and the treated wastewater MMSD discharges to the lake has become **more polluted over the years**. Steve traces one of the causes, based on correspondence from MMSD's head engineer in the Office of Contract Compliance to Veolia, to Veolia's **change in chemicals** used to manage biosolids that **drastically slowed the treatment process**.

#### **Whistleblower #2 – Greg Gryskiewicz**

Greg worked for Veolia for nearly 15 years in a variety of assignments in the operations of the MMSD plants. He left in 2024 because of his ethical concerns about Veolia's mismanagement practices and the lack of oversight by MMSD staff. As he left, he wrote a [7-page report](#) outlining and documenting the **poor maintenance** and **destruction of the plant equipment** as well as **inadequate staffing** levels. Greg spoke publicly of his concerns at a Common Ground press conference on May 11, 2026. A copy of his original 7-page report is found in Appendix B. On May 17, Greg shared with us a more detailed [37-page report](#) further documenting the many problems he has seen at the plants. This report can be found in Appendix C.

### **Whistleblower #3 – Pam Schultz**

Pam worked for 18 years in all aspects of plant operations. She retired in 2021. Pam reported to us on her many experiences with the **fear and intimidation** practices conducted by the Veolia management staff. She knows and believes there are many good employees who want to operate the plants in an efficient and productive manner but are held back by Veolia management practices centered on **saving Veolia money** and keeping the staff in line. She had first-hand experience with the Veolia practice of not maintaining equipment and purchasing equipment that became unusable and inoperative. Pam also had **direct experience of Veolia “lying about their performance numbers”** on many occasions and not reporting all of the sewage dumps into the Lake.

Additionally, Pam read Greg Gryskiewicz's full report and said that the conditions in the secondary building that Greg describes are absolutely true. She took over 100 pictures of that building. It has **asbestos** in the ceiling tiles. The ceilings were crumbling and falling. She **filed an unsafe conditions report** with MMSD and Veolia but got no response.

### **Whistleblower #4 – Anonymous**

This person worked for MMSD for 16 years and retired in March of 2025. They had a high-level management position and **have written a 30-page report** which can be presented to auditors in a face-to-face confidential meeting. They verified that the South Shore plant is not working at peak efficiency and that the inadequate maintenance complaints are absolutely true. **MMSD has no system in place for verifying that work orders are delivered and actually implemented.** There is only one MMSD person in contract compliance assigned to check on maintenance. **Veolia “runs the equipment to fail”**; they do not maintain it.

### **Whistleblower #5 – Anonymous, current employee**

Has worked at the MMSD plants for Veolia for 21 years. Has **pictures and videos of poor maintenance and equipment mismanagement.** In the plant that dries and makes Milorganite, the final product was previously tested every day for **PCBs.** **Now it is only**

tested once a week. This saves Veolia money. At the plants, the Veolia management staff is abusive and intimidating, causing many people to quit or just not work very hard at all.

#### **Whistleblower #6 – Jacob Holbert**

Worked for Veolia for 13 years, left in 2020 because of what he considered a hostile work environment. He contends Veolia management belittles and harasses employees, especially if they disagree. The commonly used management phrase is “FIFO” (“Fit In or Fuck Off”). Employees never see or talk to MMSD staff. Maintenance is very poor. Equipment is not being fixed. There are no equipment back-ups when something fails. Veolia is fudging the numbers on the quality control for Milorganite. He has documents to verify this. This was being done prior to 2016, and needs to be investigated to determine if this is still happening. He affirms Greg Gryskiewicz’s comments.

#### **Whistleblower #7 – Anonymous**

A former Veolia management employee who worked for the company for 4 years. Left because of excessive unethical behavior on Veolia’s part that could not be tolerated. As an example, this person witnessed “pencil whipping” of preventative maintenance documentation—meaning that monthly preventative maintenance was not being done for 6 months but reports were “back dated” to falsify that the maintenance was done each month. This person said that neglected corrective maintenance work frequently led to plant capacity reductions. Penny pinching on chemicals led to unsalable Milorganite. This person said that Veolia managers would bring retribution against employees and that often operator positions either were not filled or filled with unqualified supervisors. Upon this person’s departure they gave a number of these details to the MMSD legal staff but said they seemed “uninterested in pursuing anything.” This person concluded that Veolia is “advertising treatment flow capacities that they cannot do,” verifying that the plants are never running at full capacity.

#### **Whistleblower #8 – Anonymous**

Worked for Veolia for 1.5 years as a Conveyance Technician and an Instrument Technician. In this job they were checking on flow volumes. Says that they agree that because of Veolia mismanagement, flow optimization is not good; the plants are running at low capacity, and untreated waste is going into Lake Michigan. The main reason is that the plant equipment is not running properly. MMSD hires a number of junior engineers with no experience and little or no supervision running projects. MMSD also purchases equipment that never gets used. “MMSD has real problems.” This person has pictures to support a lot of what he/she saw there.

#### **Whistleblower #9 – Anonymous**

Worked for MMSD for over 3 decades in water quality and tested the water in all stages of the process. They stated that water quality reports were falsified.

**Whistleblower #10 – Anonymous**

A union official, whose members work for Veolia in the two plants, explained that they have talked to many current and former members who verify that the equipment is “run to fail” and maintenance records are not kept properly.

**Whistleblower #11 – Anonymous**

A high level MMSD employee says that the South Shore plant never runs at capacity. This person is not sure why but said that it SHOULD run at full capacity. Verified that Veolia did change the chemicals used in the treatment process and that there was quite an extensive contentious process for attempting to resolve the issue. The chemicals were changed by Veolia to save money since Veolia pays for the chemicals used in the treatment process. Effluent (pollution) standards were raised by MMSD to allow Veolia to stay in contract compliance.

**Whistleblower #12 – Robert Patterson**

He worked for Veolia for 17 years. 14 of these years were at the South Shore plant. He was a powerhouse operator and retired in 2019. Veolia tried to design new equipment that never worked. They also did not keep a parts inventory that would help with maintenance. Verified many of the other maintenance claim problems.

**Whistleblower # 13 – Anonymous**

These union officials with members working for Veolia want to remain anonymous to protect their members. They describe a culture of retribution by Veolia. Veolia replaces union workers with non-union people in order to save money. Veolia also understaffs the facilities to save money.

**Whistleblower #14 – Robert Blake**

Worked for 20 years for Veolia on piping, controls and pumps. Retired in 2015. Veolia has no incentive to do equipment maintenance. Veolia is a very anti-union company. They offer a stock purchase plan to some employees but not to union members.

**Whistleblower #15 – Anonymous**

Worked for Veolia for 15 years. Left for another job. Was an operations manager. Veolia’s management is not very good. They would micro-manage this person’s work. South Shore has an aging infrastructure.

**Whistleblower - #16 Anonymous**

Worked for MMSD for 31 years. Retired in 2021. Knew all about the wastewater testing. Veolia would falsify the credentials of people certifying test results of water quality.

Veolia does not care about dumps of sewage in the Lake, saying that the mussels will eat the waste. Veolia staff told this person to destroy certain records. They did so but kept a copy before destroying them. Not happy with how Veolia and MMSD ran the facilities. Very nervous about talking publicly about what they know.

#### **Whistleblower - #17 Anonymous**

Currently works for Veolia. 20 years there. Maintenance is not good at all. Staff is eliminated, making it very hard to keep up with all of the maintenance needs. “Malicious compliance” is the way the equipment is maintained. Work orders “disappear” as do reports on work completion. There used to be 4 people working on preventative maintenance, now there are 2. Veolia has eliminated 40-50% of preventative maintenance work. The operating system is broken. The plants are unsafe for workers because of the lack of maintenance. The plants do not run at peak efficiency, especially during rainstorms. Half of the plant generators do not run properly. Veolia treats the equipment like you would treat a rental car, meaning it's not theirs so “who cares.”

#### **Whistleblower # 18 Anonymous**

Current MMSD employee since 2014. Reported to us about careless maintenance. Gages are broken. The Northwest side relief sewer is not fixed. In this relief sewer it can't be determined how much water is being diverted. In all of this person's years they have never seen South Shore run at full capacity. “Everyone knows about the mismanagement. It's the honest truth.” Kevin Shafer is not held accountable for mismanagement by Veolia.

#### **Whistleblower #19 Anonymous**

Has worked for MMSD for 15 years. Knows water lab readings are supposed to be done quarterly and annually. Veolia squeezes these readings into only 3 or fewer but charges for 5. Many of the MMSD people would like to get rid of Veolia but they do not have the power to do so.

#### **Whistleblower #20 – Jim Robertson**

Heard about Greg Gryskiewicz's testimony and called us to say he will testify and that what Greg is saying is absolutely true. Jim worked in maintenance for 13 years from 2007 until 2020 when he retired. He was a machinist (in the union) and worked at Jones Island. He says MMSD lets Veolia get away with “everything.” Veolia “runs the equipment to fail.” They have no incentives to maintain the equipment. He would write up preventative maintenance orders and things would never get fixed. Basically, he was not able to do his job. Veolia got a 10% mark-up fee when they were replacing equipment, so fixing equipment was not in their interest.

The original Jones Island plant was built with a lot of redundancy so that if something went down, there was a back-up. Over the years Veolia let all of this go and now there is little or no redundancy in equipment.

### **Summary**

It is undeniable that the MMSD wastewater facilities do not ever run at full capacity and have not done so for some time. We have also verified this through the MMSD website, particularly during the April 2026 rain event which led to an overflow into Lake Michigan.

To recap, here are the areas of mismanagement that our whistleblowers have identified that have caused this problem of underperformance and more:

- 1) **FALSIFIED EQUIPMENT RECORDS:** Equipment is not being properly maintained and maintenance records and work orders are being falsified or deleted.
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- 7) **NO OVERSIGHT:** MMSD staff are not properly monitoring Veolia's management of the facilities.

For more information, contact Bob Connolly: [bconnolly@jamescompany.com](mailto:bconnolly@jamescompany.com) or 414-491-5910.

## Appendix A — Steve Jacquart Testimony April 2026

Common Ground Protect Our Water Hearing  
Milwaukee County War Memorial Center  
750 North Lincoln Memorial Drive

April 30, 2026

Testimony by Steve Jacquart

Good evening. My name is Steve Jacquart. I was the Intergovernmental Coordinator at the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) for almost 19 years. I retired three years ago and I'm the person who is the whistleblower who reached out to Common Ground.

The decision to go public with information showing the mismanagement of our sewage system has been a tough and emotional one for me. I enjoyed working at MMSD and met many friends through the agency. Some people there may prefer that these problems be kept quiet and not shared with the public. But I keep thinking about the safety of the many thousands of people who enjoy our beaches and waterways. I think about how we get our drinking water from Lake Michigan.

I'm standing here because I strongly believe that taxpayers have a right to know about any actions that threaten public health and the environment. I also believe that it is extremely important for MMSD Commissioners to fully understand what caused the unprecedented problems at the two wastewater treatment facilities before they vote on the next \$700 million, 10-year operating contract.

I chose to work with Common Ground on this campaign because it already has a community partnership with MMSD through the Every Drop Counts water conservation program. I want to thank Common Ground, to thank all of you, for making these very important water quality and public health issues front and center.

I worked in the Mayor's Office and City Hall in Milwaukee for many years in the John Norquist administration before being hired at MMSD in June of 2004 right after rain storms flooded the Milwaukee Region. My first big assignment at the District was to staff Mayor Tom Barrett's MMSD Audit Committee which held several weeks of public testimony and issued a report with recommendations on how to reform MMSD and better protect our water resources.

Tonight I'm going public to raise some serious problems facing MMSD. I'm speaking out to ensure that the MMSD Commission has the opportunity to thoroughly investigate the mismanagement of our wastewater treatment facilities. These problems need to be brought out and addressed in public before MMSD Commissioners select which private company will operate our regional sewage system under the next operating contract.

Unfortunately, government agencies often react to public criticism by circling the wagons and getting defensive. Or fighting back. I think that a much better approach for dealing with big problems is to get the information out to the public. Get it all out. And then solve the problem. I'm appealing to the good people at MMSD and everyone here in this room to take this approach.

Since 2008, Veolia Water Milwaukee has been contracted to operate and maintain MMSD's regional wastewater treatment system. Beginning in 2016, multiple factors led to a massive breakdown with processing biosolids at the Jones Island and South Shore Wastewater Treatment Facilities. Biosolids are the organic materials derived from treated sewage sludge through the wastewater treatment process. It's what we turn into Milorganite fertilizer.

This breakdown in biosolids removal and disposal has resulted in reduced wastewater treatment capacity, increasing the risk of sewage overflows and basement backups during rain storms. Unfortunately, this reduced treatment capacity can also increase the volume of sewage that is released into our rivers and Lake Michigan when we have overflows.

Another water quality and public health threat resulting from these biosolids management troubles is that the treated wastewater being released into the lake is dirtier or more polluted. As pointed out in Chart 10 in the Wisconsin Policy Forum report, Testing the Waters, Should MMSD's Privatization Framework Be Revisited (September 2022), MMSD is paying increased fees or fines each year to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for declining water quality. The problem is so pervasive that the MMSD Commission voted to allow Veolia to violate its contractual standards for treated wastewater as a measure to reduce the risk of sewage overflows and save money for the rest of the contract period which ends in 2028.

In layman's terms, this means that the treated wastewater MMSD discharges into Lake Michigan every day contains higher levels of bacteria. This has been happening since sometime around 2016 when this massive biosolids management problem began.

The statements I just outlined are all supported in public documents, including, MMSD Commission documents, contract amendments, engineering technical reports, plant capacity memos, and letters. Some of this information Common Ground has obtained through Freedom of Information Requests. Having worked at MMSD, I can tell you it has many, many more public documents that would bolster these statements. But this information has never been released to the public or presented to the MMSD Commission in a coherent manner.

Tonight I join Common Ground in requesting that MMSD conduct an independent, third-party performance audit of Veolia's management of the regional sewage system before voting on the next operating contract. There are many great, talented people who work at or used to work at MMSD and Veolia. I know that many of these workers would like to speak up, but are afraid to do so. Conducting an independent, third-party performance audit would give workers the opportunity to tell us what they think about the management of our wastewater system. It's absolutely critical that these perspectives be documented and shared directly with the great, talented people on the MMSD Commission before it votes on the next operating contract.

In some ways I feel like I still work for MMSD, so my advice to them is that when the contract documents with the next private operator get signed, sign those documents here in this room and invite the public. Tell the world how your decision will ensure that the two wastewater treatment facilities once again run at their maximum rated capacities, while routinely meeting contract effluent limits.

Thanks again to the good people at Common Ground. Thank you for standing with me, and thank you for your commitment to clean water.

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Steve Jacquart served as the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District's Intergovernmental Coordinator from 2004 through 2023. Prior to that, he served in several roles in Milwaukee City Hall, including as the Mayor's Chief of Staff, Mayor's Policy Director, and Deputy Commissioner of the Department of City Development.

## Appendix B — Greg Gryskiewicz 2023 Letter to MMSD Leadership

Dear MMSD senior management and staff,

It has come to my attention that you have been contacting former Veolia water employees regarding the Jones Island and South Shore wastewater facilities (known as “JI” and “SS” from now on). Although your true intentions in doing this is up for debate, what is not up for debate is the fact there are serious problems that are present and ongoing at both facilities. I (who will remain anonymous due to fear of being sued) am coming forward with information in the hopes things will improve at both facilities. In a perfect world it would be nice to sit down and have a reasonable conversation about what I am going to talk about, but the risks are simply too great. I am writing this letter as a “last hope” that MMSD staff, management, and leaders might care about what I have to say, and that there is an end goal of improving the facilities they own. With that said, I have an insight many people don't have due to positions held and experience at both facilities. It is possible that you are aware of all of the information I will be sharing, if so you will already understand the seriousness of the situation you have on your hands. If you are unaware of some/all of the information, then this should help you make decisions to “right the ship” and avoid it from sinking, which is the path it's currently going on. With that said, let's directly get into a simple list of serious problems that need to be addressed.

- 1) **Complete asset destruction:** Existing equipment along with new district funded equipment is not properly maintained. Existing equipment (aka equipment more than 7 years old without refurbishment) is universally either in a state of complete failure or reduced performance. Reduced performance is not an issue when there is redundancy, however universally there is NO redundancy at both plants. Veolia has maintained 1 working piece of equipment for every 3 that are in existence. For example: If there are 3 pumps, only 1 will work reliably, if there are 6 then only 2 will work properly. This is the case in every department at both facilities. New equipment has been put in service and used 100% of the time in order to keep things running. The older failed/worn out equipment is then not used, fixed, or replaced. On paper it looks like there is more equipment available than what truly is. This cycle of “run to fail and not fix” has led to complete asset destruction. It can be verified by simply talking with plant operators about how many pieces of equipment under their control work properly and how many don't.
- 2) **No redundancy:** As previously mentioned, there is no redundancy anywhere. I would say at least 50% of the equipment at both sites are under a reduced functioning status. 15-20% of all significant assets are not functional at all. This is a serious problem because the expectations put on the performance of both plants is higher than ever. One simple failure leads to significant problems. Power outages, air outages, pump failures, etc all lead to rush jobs to barely keep things running. The stress level at both

plants has hit an alltime high because something as simple as a power outage leads to fears of permit violations and firings.

- 3) **Staffing levels:** It's unknown as to if MMSD is aware of the staffing issues at both plants. It's also unknown if MMSD even cares about the staffing levels. The reality is Veolia has taken exorbitant amounts of time to fill vacant positions. From my understanding this has always been the case. However it has become a serious problem that is directly affecting everything. Unqualified people with no experience have been put in positions of running the power house at both facilities in the past year. This will never happen at We Energies, so how is it ok to happen at MMSD's own facilities? Training times of new employees has been reduced to weeks instead of months in an effort to save money. Important jobs have been left vacant due to lack of staffing, especially at the "SS" facility. Over 45 shifts have gone unmanned at both facilities combined, in the last year. This has never been an issue and is a direct result of slow hiring practices, refusal to fill vacant positions, and a turn over rate that is likely at the highest point in 30+ years. Management staff have refused to cover vacant jobs themselves (which I have been told has been a past practice). The unions present at both sites don't hire, fire, or train workers, they are helpless to provide more workers to see that both facilities are staffed. Yet universally the unions are blamed for why there are vacancies that are not covered due to extreme understaffing. Understaffing is also a direct result of elimination of job positions to the point there aren't enough people to do the jobs. A great example of this is when "outside contractors" have been brought in to do simple tasks like change gearbox oil, when at one time I am told there are 3 people on site that were responsible for that. Veolia likely reserves that right to use outside contractors to change gearbox oil, however that doesn't justify understaffing.
- 4) **Employee morale:** Employee morale is so low at both facilities I have been told the turn over rate in the last year is probably higher than the last 20 years combined. This is significant if you consider the people are leaving not for retirement but because they can't deal with what's going on and how they are treated. "Who cares" is the direct attitude from senior upper Veolia management. In the last year some of the most experienced workers have left both facilities for other places. MANY more have their resumes out/are actively looking to leave, including existing management, operators, maintenance personnel. It takes years to have an employee that is fully capable to handle their position under any circumstances, and losing the best ones is not something that can be replaced in a reasonable amount of time. If something is not done with the low morale even more people will leave, which combined with poor hiring practices, will lead to complete failure of the systems in place.
- 5) **The Veolia management staff turnover rate:** It's equal to a company that's going out of business. Managers disappear from their positions (likely fired) with no direction to

anyone (including other management) if they are coming back or what's going on. New replacements show up at high level positions that have no experience in waste water, no relevant qualifications, and provide no direction. These people “mysteriously” get fired or disappear a year later, with no explanation. The management staff itself is often leading departments they themselves are not even qualified to work in. How is this possible? You yourself (MMSD) would not hire someone to be an engineer that has no experience or schooling for that, so how is it that it's ok if Veolia does things like this? Even worse (as a direct result of this) most of the Veolia management is not capable of running either facility in any capacity, because most of them have no experience doing so (hired from the street). In the event of a worker “Sick out” or mass exodus of employees, what will happen?

- 6) **Upper Management staff without any knowledge:** Countless mistakes have been made from poor decisions directed by management. Upper management has no idea what's going on in the facilities for three reasons: 1: They literally don't leave their office. 2: Most have never performed any job at the facility. 3: They don't listen to anyone below them, and they don't have meetings with the workers. Don't believe this? Sit down with the top 3-4 people at “JI” (each independently) and ask them to tell you what are the serious things that need to be fixed at JI. Ask the top 3 in charge to give you a tour and explain to you how the facility works. Ask the workers on site if they have even met the top 3 in command. Most workers have never even met the top 3 that are running JI. South shore is better in regards to this because of how active the management staff is, but they are fairly new (due to extreme turnover rate). In some world this might be deemed acceptable if the upper management listened to/were open to ideas/thoughts from their own management team, but they aren't. Top Management has an “idea” on how to run things. Unfortunately they will not listen to anyone, and disregard any idea that they think doesn't align with their thoughts. This is completely insane. Most of them have no experience in any capacity of actually running the facility from a worker perspective, many have no prior management credentials, they have no idea of how serious the problems are, and they literally never leave the office to even know what's going on. Ask them how often do they leave the office to tour the plant to see what's going on? That question alone would tell you how out of touch they are.
- 7) **No concern over urgency:** There is absolutely nothing resembling urgency towards fixing things. Downtime doesn't cost Veolia money, so presumably the more time things are spent non working the more money they save. Important pieces of equipment have failed for years with no concern. Many significant failures could have been prevented if effort had been put forward to solve known issues. When serious equipment failures exist (that warrant huge meetings between management and workers to come up with a plan to handle them) nothing is done. Something needs to be done to create a system that sets expectations on how fast things get fixed, and “over 90s” isn't it, for reasons in point (11).

- 8) **Communication:** There is no communication of intents, goals, plans, etc from management to workers. There is no communication between upper and lower management. Proper decisions can't be made when no one knows what's going on. I am sure you (MMSD) have realized this when you talk with the people in charge at Veolia. You wouldn't be seeking information/thoughts from former employees of veolia if you trusted what veolia management said and/or believed they knew what was going on.
- 9) **South shore:** Face it, MMSD nor Veolia knows what they are doing with the SS facility. They have been on the verge of contract and permit violations for YEARS. If this isn't addressed it will lead to both facilities violating permits or contracts. South shore has been at a reduced water treatment capacity for years (I am told they dump into the deep tunnel constantly instead of taking the wastewater, including significant amounts in the last year). If "SS" is allowed to continue on this path it will wreck both plants. The management staff at SS has been changed over multiple times, and the problems persist. Veolia has attempted to force unqualified managers from JI to manage the SS facility. If they said no they were threatened with discipline and often held back from promotions. Veolia knows they don't know how to run that facility and they are setting whoever runs it up for failure and being fired.
- 10) **Wages and benefits:** Very few people want to work in waste water and very few people want to work nights and weekends anymore. The pool of qualified people that even have the knowledge/skills to do the work at the treatment plants is dropping every day. This is a huge problem because for the first time in over 30 years the outside world has caught up (and in some cases surpassed) the pay & benefits of working at both facilities. My understanding is Veolia is stalling out negotiations for wage increases, benefits, backpay, etc. This is exceptionally foolish because the combination of terrible morale, lack of leadership, constant excessive stress, constant turnover in management, etc, combined with the fact people have legitimate options to go elsewhere for the same or slightly less pay, the employee exodus will accelerate. The amount of people quitting in the last year is the tip of the iceberg. Regardless of what MMSD thinks of the workforce (Veolia upper management thinks everyone is overpaid), the reality is simple: If no contract is signed or significant raises are not agreed upon the risk of 20-25% of the workforce quitting is a real possibility in the next 1-2 years. It is not greed, people will work for minimal pay if they are treated well and the work environment is decent. The only thing keeping people at the facilities is the pay and health care right now, and that will go away with Veolias stalling on solving negotiations.
- 11) **Work order misconduct:** There is no excuse for the work order system abuse that exists at both facilities. A work order is generated for a broken piece of equipment, and the equipment is looked at (eventually). If the equipment has a backup available, it will

not be fixed for months unless it's a very simple fix. If the fix requires parts, or significant work, it will not get fixed until multiple work orders get put in for the same thing, or the backup fails and there is no choice. Many work orders disappear with no trace, many are closed out without being fixed, and many are rejected for absolutely no reason. Any work order that falls under "reduced output but asset still works" will not get addressed, period. If an equipment operator were required to sign off that a work order was "done" and the asset is returned to "working condition" before the work order were to be closed out, 30+ percent of all work orders in the last year would be outstanding right now. Significant numbers of PMs at both facilities are also not done properly per past practice or what is written directly on the PM. This has led to facility wide reduction in performance of all assets due to improper lubrication, broken parts due to lack of inspections, reduced performance due to lack of annual cleanings of tanks/channels/filters, etc.

- 12) **Cannibalism of parts:** The cannibalism of parts is unacceptable, and is an ongoing problem. It's understandable that many parts are no longer available, and emergencies happen. It's unacceptable that the district provides multiple new assets and as one of those fails it is fixed by stealing parts from other assets rather than buying replacement parts. This is not a "Covid" problem, aka "parts back order", I have been told this has been ongoing for 15+ years. This is a massive contributor towards why there is no redundancy for anything.
- 13) **The reliance of outside contractors and suppliers for everything:** MMSD/Veolia might think hiring contractors or just buying everything is a solution to all problems. The problem with this is a significant amount of capital projects/rehabs have reduced functioning over what was existing, perform poorly, have longevity issues (fails prematurely), or just outright never works. So many things could have been fixed in house if the staffing levels existed to do so, and it would have been fixed correctly in less time. There are more contractors working at both facilities than workers at times, how is this possible? Once something is determined to be more involved than a simple project, it often gets farmed out to a contractor who doesn't care and does not have the expertise to do the work. The skill and capability exists in the workforce on site to make things better, but as long as there is no incentive and budgets that make it impossible, it will never happen.

With all of that said here is my educated opinion: If the above issues are not addressed (and fast) the facilities will cross the point of no return. The issues will generate contractual and state permit violations, and will lead to a mass exodus of all of the talent in the workforce. This will put more pressure on MMSD, and tarnish both the reputation of MMSD and Veolia water. These issues exist because of faults of all parties involved: MMSD, Veolia Water, and the workforce themselves. Ultimately it is MMSD's facilities that are failing due to the issues. It's MMSD that will be forced to clean up the problems, and taxpayers that will have to pay. The liability of where things are at could result in people being removed from their positions

(including MMSD management), lawsuits, and huge fines. I know MMSD knows this, because why on earth would MMSD be contacting former employees to find out information? I want to be part of the solution, not the problem. I don't want to see the facilities fail. There is so much talent at every level within the facilities (from management to workers) that I view the whole situation as unfortunate. I have thought about it a lot and here is what I think the 5 major causes for the serious problems are, and how to fix them:

- 8) The truth is the number one problem that's going on is mismanagement of both facilities. The Veolia upper management staff is simply too out of touch, too inexperienced, and the top individuals have no idea what they are doing. On face value it appears their goal is to simply get as much money out of the contract with complete disregard for the facilities. They have driven the morale so low that work slowdowns have started and people are leaving. All levels of the workforce (management and workers) are afraid of being fired if they speak up about issues. I don't know how to fix this, however MMSD needs to address these things. MMSD needs to set boundaries and be very clear about them. MMSD needs to hold Veolia accountable for staffing and equipment. If there is any doubt as to how much stuff isn't working properly, tour the facilities and talk with the operators that run the facilities and ask them to explain everything that works vs doesn't work. What would be learned during this points to one thing: Inadequate staffing levels and improper maintenance.
- 9) The budget or funding that is available to management is inadequate. The management staff is not given enough money (either via the agreed MMSD-Veolia contract or by Veolia itself) to do a proper job. The management of the trades simply cannot operate effectively or properly with the budgets they are given. Many of these trade managers have done an exceptional job of fixing things with what they have to work with. However everything they are allowed to do is focused on getting it fixed for today and not so it lasts for years down the road. They simply can't fix things properly because that costs money and Veolia is not on site to make things work better in the future (process improvements).
- 10) Morale needs to be improved at both facilities. I am unsure as to how this can happen, but if it goes unchecked the exodus will increase and serious consequences will happen. Management in specific needs to not be worried they will come into work and get fired. Many of the mid to low level management is exceptional, and unfortunately they have lost many exceptional people in those positions in the last year or two because of upper management.
- 11) Some form of "clarity" needs to be found that MMSD owns two public works facilities (JI and SS) and that turning them into a money making enterprise for a private company is foolish, and without adequate safeguards and contract compliance in place, the situation will end in complete failure. If the public was aware of how poorly managed the facilities are, the millions wasted in taxpayer

revenue, and how MMSD on face value has taken a position of being a “slum lord” I can’t imagine the backlash that could happen.

- 12) Leadership needs to be found, long term goals need to be set and communicated, and some form of direction needs to exist. If the facility is to remain privatized it needs to be run better and with the long term in mind. Veolia has held no meetings with the workforce to talk about long term goals, what their vision is, etc, in over 10 years (from what I am told). Every day is about getting through that day with no thought about next week let alone next year. There isn't a treatment plant in the state of Wisconsin that is run with that little regard towards the future. This cant continue.

Ultimately I have no idea what MMSD has planned for both facilities. Maybe MMSD is attempting to remove Veolia for breach of contract (and take it back over), or MMSD is planning on signing a contract extension in a few years. I just know that serious problems are present, they aren't going to go away, and they will get significantly worse if not addressed. I believe that with better Veolia Water upper management staff, clear goals, a more reasonable budget, (and with improved morale), most of the issues could be resolved and the private/public partnership can continue. If that doesn't happen, MMSD will likely be forced to take the facility over and that isn't necessarily a good thing. Lets face it, MMSD doesn't know how to run the treatment plants, they have been privatized longer than most of the MMSD employees have worked for the district. I know it's not in your best interest (or likely desire) to take the facilities back over. I just hope that what I have talked about (and much more) in this letter gets addressed and that improvements are made. Much of the workforce at both plants are excellent at what they do (both management and worker), and it's only because of them that anything is running at all. Ultimately I know that I (and many of my peers) will be leaving in the next year depending on how things are handled. MMSD can't afford to lose any more talent, and I think you understand that. With that said, I want to make it clear that most of the workforce (management and workers) want to do things right. Nobody wants to come to work fearing for their job, worrying about pay, or feeling like nobody cares. There is so much possibility for things to improve. It's my hope that they do. I know that whatever is going on behind the scenes is going to likely lead to some big changes, I just hope they are for the better future of the treatment plants. With that said, thanks for your time

-Concerned employee

Greg Gryskiewicz  
November 23, 2023

## Appendix C — Greg Gryskiewicz Full 2026 Report

**Written by Greg Gryskiewicz (Employee at Jones Island for 14 years ending in 2024)**  
**Document written of own free will on 5-17-2026**

The Jones Island facility was in a severe state of disrepair when I left in 2024, and continues to remain in “less than stellar condition”. Some things have improved for the better however many things have gotten worse over the time I worked there. In this packet of information I will cover many aspects of Jones Island and south shore waste water plants. I am more than willing to answer any questions regarding the facilities or anything that is written in this document. I am also willing to testify that all information in this packet is accurate to what I experienced. The purpose of releasing this information is so that people can be held accountable for what goes on at the waste water plants. I have nothing to gain from coming forward with this document, I have no ties to Veolia, Jacobs, MMSD, Common ground (besides meeting with common ground to talk about what I saw and speaking out publicly) and I am not political in the least. I do not vote politically and this can be verified by my voting record. My involvement in this situation is solely based on the fact I believe what's going on is wrong and that I (as a single individual) can't do anything about it. As a tax payer I also believe I should have a say in how the waste water plants are run and other tax payers should know what's going on and be able to decide what's right for Milwaukee (and surrounding areas).

### **List of concerning things I have seen at Jones island waste water plant:**

#### **Facility conditions:**

Universally there is a significant amount of settling that is occurring around buildings. Much of this is due to improper maintenance. Roof drain leaks aren't fixed, concrete expansion joints aren't sealed, brickwork isn't tuck pointed, and general building maintenance is at an absolute minimum. Veolia didn't hire summer help for a few years and left weeds to grow to over 8' tall all over the plant (and didn't contract anyone to do the work). Bathrooms have been left abandoned instead of maintaining them. Operator locker room showers have had no hot water for months on end. Control rooms have been left in an abandoned state (no functional a/c or heat with temps in excess of 90 degrees) with operators still occupying them. Exposure to hazardous atmospheres in the occupied control room in preliminary treatment at JI has been ongoing for over a decade. The secondary treatment facility building has had numerous pipe breaks, and a significant amount of the ceiling fell to the floor due to water damage. The same building did not have functioning heat in winter for numerous years, leading to broken pipes. Many buildings appear to be abandoned due to how significant the lack of maintenance is. Sump pumps are not maintained properly and flooding is a regular occurrence all over the plant. It's not just a pump issue though, the pumps are being asked to handle volumes/use they were never designed to handle due to how much piping/equipment leaks.

The thickening building was deemed unfit for MMSD employees to use (I was told air quality due to lack of proper HVAC and hazardous gases) so they built a new office area in the maintenance building for themselves. That office area that MMSD left was then what operators were told to use because it was the only reasonably clean sink available for Prelim operators and thickening operators (When MMSD used the area operators were not allowed to use the kitchen sink, which left people cleaning plates/coffee pots in the same sink that sludge tests were dumped out in. The extent of any “updating” to control rooms for a majority of the plant consisted of paint and cheap vinyl plank tiles to cover up the damaged asbestos tiles workers called osha on. Secondary treatment’s building used literal white folding tables that were from walmart as a control center for over 4 years. Management (veolia and occasionally MMSD) constantly said new control rooms were going to be built, the HVAC would be fixed, etc, but it literally never happened. I have been told that operators have been put back in the preliminary treatment office, which has an unsafe atmosphere (Hydrogen sulfide gas). It is significant enough it causes fridges for food to fail within 6 months due to the reaction of the gas and the refrigerant piping creating a leak. When confronted with not having a fridge to put food in, Veolia management would drag their feet on getting a new fridge and sometimes outright refuse to buy a new one for 4 months or more. Most control rooms were infested with mice, I had rodents crawl up my legs in secondary treatment and 2-3 a week were caught in the prelim control room. The term “Dated and in poor shape” could be used to describe significant parts of both Ji and south shore.

### **Equipment conditions:**

Universally equipment across the board is either at a reduced capacity, or not working. The facility was built with a design philosophy of redundancy, every piece of equipment was oversized for the intended use and one or two backups were present. When the main piece of equipment failed there was no loss in service. There was enough time to fix the main equipment. For my entire tenure at the facility almost all the redundancy didn't work, didn't exist (was pulled apart for parts), or was undersized to the point it couldn't keep up with demand. Veolia failed to maintain most equipment at a reliable level and MMSD failed to install new equipment that was capable of keeping up with demand. Great examples of this are the TAS pumps in thickening, 4 original progressive cavity pumps that could each handle 3-4 pieces of equipment's sludge production were replaced with pumps that could barely handle one equipment's sludge production. After the install of the new pumps they completely removed all the redundancy and the moment any pump wore out (which is quickly because they ran at 100% all the time due to being undersized) you lost the ability to provide a high volume of sludge to the milorganite facility. This could directly result in an inability to waste biosolids from both Ji and south shore because those pumps are required to get sludge to the milorganite facility. Another great example would be the mechanical bar screens in preliminary treatment. MMSD bought quality bar screens that filter out debris from the waste water but they bought the smallest debris transfer screw they could when larger ones were an option ( a MMSD engineer told me this). Due to the combined sewer system the amount of debris in a rain storm can exceed 80-120+ yards of material that has to go through a bottle neck of a transport screw on

the screen itself. This leaves operators using gardening tools to attempt to remove material that has plugged the equipment, which is unsafe. This under engineering problem has also caused the building to flood on numerous occasions due to the need to shut the equipment down as it is overwhelmed with material. It also has led to excessive wear on the screening equipment. There are countless examples I can give related to this, I can provide pages worth of specific equipment that functioned under reduced capacity. The hard and fast rule is whatever piece of equipment that was brought in by MMSD was not equal to what was existing and directly resulted in reduced capacity/performance. From an outside standpoint things might have looked like everything was ok because broken/reduced service pieces of equipment might have not been labeled as out of service or appeared to be available on the computer control system. However when needed they couldn't be relied on.

### **Work order system problems:**

There was a computerized work order system that changed over the years I was there. To say the system had problems is an understatement. Employees would put in work orders for equipment that needed work and unless it was an easy fix, they could sit in the system for months. Work orders disappeared, were deleted, and some were rejected without valid reasons. Numerous occasions I would keep putting a work order in for equipment that I really needed and nobody would look at it. On numerous occasions I would go to a department head (by phone or in person) and tell them to stop screwing around and get it fixed only to have the work order deleted. I was told personally by numerous high up members of management to not put details in the work order that the equipment wasn't properly fixed during the previous work order. Veolia kept changing the work order system and required more and more effort to be put in to start a work order. Multiple scales of urgency, category points, and deficiency categories were added which overly complicated things. If anything was wrong with the points system, or management felt it wasn't as important on the critical scale as you, and they would reject it. You received no notice of rejection, only if you searched for the specific piece of equipment and looked up its history could you find it out (which was difficult). This left me and everyone else believing a work order existed for a piece of equipment and nobody was ever going to come out to look at it. The problems went far beyond this however. During the last 2 months I was there (2024) an asset manager who recently started stated that he went through the work order system and discovered a lot of things that didn't make sense. His direct words to a room over 40+ people was "based on the work order numbers generated that there are far too few people working here than we need to handle to work". He also stated "that there was a significant number of work orders and PMs that were closed out with no time on them". This doesn't make sense, considering how much effort it takes to put a single work order in. Nobody would ever put a work order in "just to do it", and no work order ever submitted could be done with zero time on it. On top of this when I worked maintenance I would get told on many occasions to enter work orders on my phone to "put time on them". I didn't understand what was going on with this at the time, but now I believe it was done to close out work orders erroneously.

I believe this system gave a "matrix" or a "spreadsheet" out that MMSD could see. That sheet would list everything that's broken and what was fixed. This was also likely used to track

money invested in an asset. On MMSDs end of things they only knew what was broken and what wasn't based on the incorrect assumption that that data was accurate. Since nobody from MMSD ever spent time with the operators to determine what's really broken and what's not, they relied solely on Veolia's word and the work order system to determine what's going on. Also, of extreme importance was the fact assets were actively removed from the system. New equipment wasn't added to the system and old equipment that existed/was used, ceased to exist in the system. The only thing the district seemed to care about is work orders that existed past 90 and 120 days from when they were approved by management. There were many assets that only existed under a generic "area" asset number, which meant there was no way to track any of them. A great example would be plant drain valves used to have asset numbers for many of them, therefore work orders were generated for someone to work on them to make sure they actually work. Those disappeared and therefore no work order was ever issued for the asset, and a lot of the drain valves don't work properly anymore.

### **Asset destruction through lack of maintenance:**

The first half of my time at veolia was exceptionally bad from a complete asset destruction standpoint. On countless times I witnessed machinists pull apart pumps/gearboxes/equipment that were basically junk, and inspect them. They would tell their boss that it needed a complete overhaul or replacement, only to be told to put it back together with a set of gaskets and run it. The operators would know the asset was not going to work, so they wouldn't run it for months. In an emergency (aka other similar equipment failed) the operator would have no choice but to run it. It would blow itself apart immediately or last for a shift or two, fail, and a new work order would be created. On paper this appeared as two separate incidents but the asset was never fixed at any point. To make matters worse it could take two machinists 8 to 16 work hours each to tear apart a piece of equipment, and that much to put it back together. That could wind up as billable hours of 16-32 hours at 80+ an hour (assuming veolia changes both wage and benefit of the employee to the asset). This is immensely important because Veolia has an agreement with MMSD that they pay the first 10-14 thousand on an asset before MMSD takes it on as a capital project. It might only take 4 or less "repairs" on paper to hit this number before Veolia stopped working on it. More recently the amount they had to pay increased I believe. Whatever the amount is, the amount would get eaten up and then the asset would sit. Veolia virtually never paid any money for parts on an asset. MMSD could take years to do something about the broken asset, and veolia (under no circumstances) would spend money to fix an asset that was a "capital project". I am not exaggerating when I say this: The grit removal system in preliminary treatment sat for over a year without working because it was a capital project, and when MMSD ordered veolia to work on it it was fixed in a single weekend. This is so ridiculous I wrote a dedicated paragraph on this later titled "grit removal". Countless times I and other workers would have to run the facility under extreme stress and dysfunction because significant/important pieces of equipment were stuck in a "who's going to pay for this" situation. I have never worked at a place that is facing a disaster situation that sat and did not do something about fixing assets. Countless finger pointing, blaming, and stalled repairs were common. To make matters worse, it was very common in the first 5 years I worked at JI for parts to be stolen off equipment to make

something run to avoid buying parts. Much of the equipment at JI is custom made and not often available off the shelf. Parts can be expensive, so Veolia would actively steal parts from other equipment to make something work. This left a trail of non-working equipment and no spare parts. Many of the electrical VFDs and components are old enough that getting parts ordered is impossible. Creative trades workers came up with the plan to buy some parts from E-bay or amazon to fix a piece of equipment and this idea was absolutely rejected. Literally a 50\$ part off ebay or amazon could potentially get an important piece of equipment running and Veolia refused to do it. There seemed to be no pot of "emergency funds" to be able to fix critical things that need to be fixed. Thursday meetings between low level management and operators became useless, people would talk about the same broken equipment and no word on when it was getting fixed.

This asset destruction hit an unbelievable height when the bar screens (that filter debris from the waste water) in preliminary treatment at JI started literally exploding. They have a large "rake" that cleans a massive screen that collects debris, and those rakes were literally blowing through the top of the equipment. When the first one happened I asked management if they knew why it failed, and was brushed off. A second one a short time later did the same thing. This completely disables the screen from working and because MMSD had removed bypass channels, every failed bar screen started reducing the capacity of the plant to take flow. This also forced more debris into the remaining bar screens and during high flow they would fail due to the load. This is a contributing factor to the building literally flooding. Well over a period of about 8 months 5 or more out of the 8 screens failed in the same way, and the facility was on the verge of flooding into the street every time it rained. It was later determined by a factory rep for the multi million dollar pieces of equipment that they had never been maintained properly, and the rep literally told me that the chains had never been tensioned and that is why they destroyed themselves. Those screens were put in brand new by MMSD, no work orders were ever issued, no workers ever maintained them, and they directly failed with a likely million dollar repair bill.. I was told that Veolia was "on the hook" to pay for it, but I have no way of verifying that was the case. It's an absolute miracle that it didn't rain much the year this happened because it would have created a disaster of unbelievable proportions (think of diverting to the lake with sewage every time it rains because the facility could have only handled under 120 million gallons a day vs 330 its rated at).. I wish I could say this was a one off type problem but a very similar situation happened with other assets too.

So much changed for the worst when it comes to maintenance over the years I was there. When I started (over 15 years ago now) the milorganite building would shut down once a year, and every person at the plant (along with 20+ machinists from the union hall) would work 12+ hours a day for over a week. Fast forward to a few years ago and a shut down consisted of less than a week and zero outside machinists. I worked one of those shut downs, and nothing even close to what was previously done was done for work. The department I was working with at the time got offered literally no overtime and we were the maintenance for the miloganite building. This is a huge problem because the building is not designed to be shut down and many things can only be done during a shut down. The whole point of the shut down was to fix things so that the building was in good shape for a whole year. This has turned into a "fix a few

issues” instead of “lets get things back into shape”. The milorganite facility is the only way both south shore and jones island have to remove solids out of the plant, and with the milorganite facility not running at peak capacity at all times they don't have the ability to properly control solids loadings. They also have to run more equipment and have a hard time idling equipment for repairs because everything is needed all the time. When I started at jones island as maintenance of the milorganite facility was needed it was common for equipment to get idled and then a team of people to work on it. When I left the only time things got idled was when there was no choice.

### **Preventative maintenance (PM) issues:**

Part of the work order system includes what are things for "preventative maintenance" and not just an order to fix something that an operator put a work request in for. These preventive maintenance items are things like monthly gate exercises, gear box oil changes, or even exterior light inspections. Many of these were done 10+ years ago by skilled trades with the help of an operator, such as gate exercises. A machinist understands a gate, its stem, nut, packing, and other parts, but they likely don't know if it's safe to open/close without affecting a process. An operator understands the process therefore the operator can work with a machinist to get the gate isolated. From when I started to when I left more and more of these weekly/monthly/annual PMs became operator responsibility. The problem is operators are not trained in inspecting nuts, or taking apart anything to grease a stem. They are not trained/have knowledge of what to look for with proper valve functioning, and aren't allowed to adjust packings. A machinist could take apart packing nuts, visually look at the condition of the nut and the threads, and fix something if it's realized it's worn. By passing these PMs to operators who can't do the work properly, or have the tools/knowledge to do it, many PMs are signed off without the full scope of work being completed. This has especially led to problems in secondary treatment at Jones Island because many valves don't work properly anymore. When I operated that part of the plant I would put work orders in for many valves that didn't work and that were never fixed. I would end up doing the same PM every year on some and they still didn't work from the last year.

### **MMSD engineering issues:**

For the most part I never met with any engineers or workers in general from MMSD. In 14+ years at JI less than 5 MMSD employees were really known by me or most other operators. Yet MMSD constantly specified new equipment, and had contractors install it, with absolutely no input from operators of the treatment plant (its possible D+D/milorganite facility had more input, the workers would need to be asked). This is a major problem because the equipment that would show up was inferior to what was there in many cases. If an existing pump can pump 400 gallons per minute and has a 20HP motor on it, the replacement would be a 200GPM pump with a 10hp motor. Someone at MMSD came to the conclusion that somehow only a 200gpm pump was needed (likely because a flow trend showed an average of 170 GPM). The problem is, as the density increases of what it's pumping the flow rate drops, the motor load increases, and whatever they looked at (or whoever gave them answers to what the pump should be) was

wrong, and now the pump can't keep up with demand. This type of screw up is in all aspects of the plant. To make matters worse, once that asset is in, that's it, operators have to deal with it. There won't be a replacement coming, so many operators would just not use it.

I have witnessed brand new equipment that collectively must have cost millions (with labor to install) literally breaking itself apart before they even made it a week. The D+D dryer feed transport screws that were upgraded had the gear boxes breaking off the end of the screws and leaking oil. I asked a contractor that installed the equipment what's going on and the response was "some of them just do that" as the gear box is bending 3/8th steel plate like it's taffy as it's running (more on this later). Sub par equipment, poor install craftsmanship, unqualified contractors working on equipment they don't have experience with, etc, was commonplace. To make matters worse, MMSD would often have "contract compliance" people on site that followed the work of contractors to "verify" things were done correctly. Many of these people had no idea what they are looking at, and would sign off on things being completed properly. A great example would be the roofs were redone on all of "secondary treatment buildings and galleries", and the roofers apparently cut all of the conduit that fed power to the exterior building lights. I don't know this for fact (since was told this is the reason and I didn't crawl on the roofs to verify cut conduit) but I do know that after the roof was put on the lights didn't work for over a year, which kept a significant part of the plant (over 1/3 of it) dark at night outside of buildings. This was brought up in countless meetings, safety standdowns, etc and nothing was done for over a year. Sub par equipment, poor install craftsmanship, unqualified contractors working on equipment they don't have experience with, etc, was commonplace. from what I was told, because MMSD signed off on the job as being "meets requirements". An even worse situation was created with what's known as the high level screws in prelim, which is so bad I made its own section titled "high level screw failures"

### **MMSD and Veolia's failure to communicate:**

A significant problem is what I call the "slum lord paradox" of the facility. MMSD owns all assets on the facility, yet they are virtually not involved on site for anything for the first 6 years I worked there. Prior to the permit violation 8 years ago, less than 5mmsd employees were routinely seen by me (or anyone else really) walking around the giant facility, and most of those were likely in contract compliance. Sure the top 3 in command at MMSD would stop in for a closed door meeting in the operations building, but workers would never be able to speak with them, and they virtually never were in any facilities. A majority of non management veolia employees have likely never had a single word or shook hands with any of the top 5 people at MMSD. For all practical purposes MMSD let veolia do whatever they wanted and no matter how bad things got with failed equipment, they wouldn't make any statements about what's being done about it. MMSD didn't even have a way for operators to contact them to figure out what's going on. As a plant operator 100% of the info I got on what MMSD was doing, when something was going to get fixed, or if it was getting fixed at all, came from veolia management. The problem is they either outright lied or didn't have an accurate idea on anything. Countless times I was told something was going to be replaced soon only to wait months if not years. To a certain extent I (and many others) believed veolia was withholding information from MMSD

because of how long things would stay broken and how surprised some of the contract compliance people were when you asked them what was going on with a broken asset. Being 100% truthful I have no idea what veolia told MMSD about anything because what information I relayed likely ended at the shift supervisor or operations supervisor, or in the work order system. Nobody had any way to know what Veolia actually told MMSD, plant operators were not in on the meetings. Being completely out of the loop on things creates a situation where you can't operate the equipment effectively because you're spending a lot of time making decisions on "what ifs". Communication from Veolia Operations and maintenance supervisors was very bad in this regard, many times pieces of equipment would be fixed and sit for weeks or months because nobody knew it was fixed.

MMSD has failed to set any standard as to what's acceptable. Universally they have made it known that "permit" or "contract" violations are not acceptable, yet there is nothing said about going into rain events with half your equipment broken and plant operators are literally praying they don't flood the prelim building into the streets. MMSD seems to not care/have no opinion on staffing levels at the facilities. Veolia management has told workers that Veolia has the right to choose how many workers are on site, and veolia has eliminated worker positions to the point they have had significant coverage issues. The nature of working at the facility lends itself to believe Veolia literally does whatever it wants and employees are kept ignorant to what veolia is actually allowed to do or not do. It's difficult to know if veolia is in compliance with MMSD's contract, and even if workers know Veolia is in violation, there is no easy way to contact MMSD to report it. In the past a union president (and workers) went to an open to the public MMSD meeting and tried to tell MMSD that there are problems and bring light to those and MMSD has done nothing.

### **Management:**

Management issues were and still are an unbelievable problem at the facilities. In the last 10+ years I have witnessed unqualified managers (people who have never operated any position in the power house) running turbine engines in the power house, whole facilities (South shore) left with nobody running it at night for multiple days a week, and Shift supervisors (who are the authority in charge at night) disappear and not be able to be contacted. I (and people I worked with) raised concerns over the plant health and were laughed at. I have been told to do things that amount to permit violations (such as retesting residual chlorine for final effluent, talked about later) when the initial test did not pass. Shift supervisors, and managers of buildings such as the milorganite facility, heads of safety, HR, and other high level jobs often disappeared without a trace/never to be seen again, with no notice as to what happened. MMSD was getting upset with these management issues too based on talking with the contract compliance workers. In the last 10 years they have had 3 or 4 heads of safety, 4 bosses of the milorganite facility, 3 heads of operations, 3 or 4 plant managers (highest person at the facility), at least 6 shift supervisors came-went, 3 asset managers, and at least 3 or 4 heads of human resources. Many of these are people who either quit, likely forced into retirement, or disappeared (presumably fired). The turn over rate with the shift supervisor position is worse than a taco bell and that is literally the person who is in charge of both facilities during the night

and on weekends. Veolia made management jobs and shift supervisor positions so undesirable and toxic that veolia would have to hire people from the street. The desperation for managers' situation resulted in people with pending felonies (with jail time) being hired somehow and unqualified people being put in charge, only to be removed at a later point or disappear. The head of operations at one point (head for over a year) showed up with virtually zero experience in waste water and I literally never met the guy because he never showed up to meetings, never had his door open, never sent emails, and never answered his phone. This was literally the head of all plant operations at Jones Island.

With that said many of the current managers are good people, and they are trying. Their effectiveness is extremely limited because they often don't have realistic budgets, and they have to deal with so many problems they can't control. Take the maintenance supervisors for example, they can't control the sub par equipment MMSD puts in, they can only work with it. Much of what MMSD does does not bring the facility up to the standard it should be at, it only maintains it right where it is or sets things backwards. Given the circumstances I believe that much of maintenance management's hands are tied and they can't do things differently if they wanted. I say this because when I left the facility in 2024 Veolia corporate told the maintenance managers they had hired an outside group to go through all spending and before things could be bought the maintenance managers needed to justify it to this group. At this same time Veolia refused to pay money to the company that provided nuts/bolts for general shop use, which meant I literally couldn't fix a piece of equipment because there were no bolts available to replace broken ones.

The following is a typical situation with the top management at the facility: The plant manager when I started (and was there for most of the time I was employed, we will call him "SR") was completely out of touch with what was going on. The facility was on the verge of a permit violation for weeks and SR walked into an office when I was talking with the shift supervisor and asked me "why are the numbers so high". Basically he was asking why the plant is on the verge of blowing DNR permit, which he just realized after weeks of being at that point. Its scary when you as an operator are trying to prevent a permit violation and the head of the facility didn't even realize the last two weeks have been a quarter inch of rain from a DNR permit violation. Eventually "SR" "retired", and a new person (with no waste water experience I was aware of) was put in his position. "SR" came back after retirement to train the new plant manager, who ultimately disappeared/was fired/who knows. Many unqualified people (defined as no experience in waste water, no management experience, no prior plant MMSD plant experience) would show up in high level positions making operation decisions that would negatively affect the facility.

Speaking of management, it was clear to me that MMSD did not trust veolia. MMSD hired former veolia retirees as "consultants" on tax payer money to work for them. These people ended up making more decisions and changes to the facility than the people that worked for Veolia with the position in charge. Literally a building such as the miloganite facility would have a Veolia management person in charge and the former boss (who is now working for MMSD) shows up and tells you what to do/how to run the facility. Clearly MMSD thought veolia

was incompetent or they wouldn't be hiring former employees to do their work. MMSD also contacted former employees on a fact finding mission at numerous points suggesting they are looking for evidence/information of wrongdoing, this was told to me by Veolia supervisors.

### **Workforce reduction and vacancies**

A considerable problem that was faced during the entirety of my time at Veolia was constant vacancies and understaffing. From when I started to when I left they had eliminated countless jobs. I was told Veolia had the right to maintain staffing at whatever level they saw fit and this is unfortunate because they chose to understaff everything. Most operations work 12 hour shifts, 4 on 4 off, this works great to get 24 hour coverage with minimal people. What this doesn't work well for is when you are 1-2 people short in a 4 person department and now everyone ends up working 20+ days straight of 12 hour shifts and gets burned out. Veolia blamed the fact people could change jobs due to union rights, and when people changed jobs it left vacancies. This really isn't accurate, the big change was younger employees not wanting to work overtime and thus you couldn't staff a place 24/7 with a handful of employees. To help alleviate South Shore vacancies I offered to go down there and train to help fill in. Veolia apparently didn't want to pay wages for people to train down there (what I was told by management) so I (and other people who would have) were not allowed to fill in. It would be better to have a qualified preliminary treatment operator from Jones island fill in at south shore with even minimal training than leaving the entire plant vacant for many nights.

Moreover they almost never added operation employees, they were always taking them away. Training for a new employee could take upwards of a year to get a fully functional/useful operator, and many jobs became so undesirable (due to management pressure) that the only people they could get for them was from the street. Well people would get into the job from the street and either quit because of how bad it was, or "bid" to another job as soon as they could. This left jobs with constant vacancies that you needed well trained people in with years of experience. At no point were attempts made to alleviate this such as figure out the reasons the job was undesirable, changing the job so it was more attractive, or to increase staffing so that a vacancy wasn't an issue. When I started there was almost always an "extra operator" on every shift, aka someone who could take over if someone went home sick or called in. When I left there was no such thing, and you had operators doing jobs for positions they weren't even qualified for. More than once I was requested to operate equipment I wasn't qualified to run because nobody was available to do it.

One of the more interesting job losses was Veolia eliminated 3 positions that used to full-time lubricate equipment in the whole plant (they did all the greasing and oil changes on equipment). That's a reasonable number of people considering how big JI is. For a while equipment wasn't getting oil changes/lubrication at all. Today the machinists do this work however veolia had gotten so behind on this at numerous points they were forced to hire contractors to do work such as changing oil on hundreds of gear boxes. This became an issue

because the contractors often didn't know what they were doing (such as changing the wrong gear box oil, using the wrong oil, missing pieces of equipment, incorrectly filling equipment, etc). This led to all sorts of issues. Veolia also understaffed the field maintenance sewer inspection workers so bad that I heard they were getting fined for being behind on CCTVing. It's accurate to say things were below minimum staffing for the entirety of when I was there.

Across the board there are not enough employees maintaining and operating the facilities. This is partially made up via hired contractors. Millions a year are spent to have contractors do simple tasks like changing gear box oil all the way to replace piping that could have been done internally if the workforce was adequate. Literally 100% of the work done by the small crew of trades/operators at Jones Island is just to keep things barely running/maintain where it's at. The on site workforce virtually never actually build anything, fix major problems, or are allowed to do anything other than the minimum. The talent exists in the existing workforce to maintain the facilities better. I was told that the contractors doing the oil changes and stuff that the onsite maintenance couldn't get to, was paid for by Veolia's money. I have no way to know that Veolia was paying for it and not MMSD (Despite MMSD paying Veolia to maintain it) It's impossible to tell who's paying for what because the same contractors that were employed by the city also did "Veolia" work. One day a contractor is doing a "capital project" that supposedly MMSD is paying for and the next day the same contractor/workers are working on a "Veolia" project. I genuinely worry that MMSD (aka tax payers) are actually paying for the contractors work for Veolia despite already paying for it in the maintenance contract. I never had any way to look into this, something didn't seem right.

### **Employee morale:**

During my employment at Jones Island/Veolia water the employee morale was abysmal for many reasons. In general operators were treated poorly. Management would get upset when operators didn't cover extra shifts. Certain operators were often working 20 to 30+ days straight of 12 hour shifts and regardless of wanting to do it, it would cause burnout. Due to understaffing and having no extra operators if someone called in the operator on duty would get stuck working a 18 hour shift. Technically the operator could go home but this would often mean the position would go unmanned and management would make a big issue out of this guilt tripping the employee. If you did not take overtime they would not consider you for management positions. Veolia wanted operators to do shift relief to relay information before/after a shift, but they didn't want to pay for it. The last few years I was at the facility they stopped doing most employee appreciation party/lunch/etc. Around Christmas time they would often bring in a catered lunch for operator employees that were stuck working Christmas, that ended along with the plant manager no longer coming in and saying thank you to the workers. I was personally told by numerous managers that "the only thing I needed was my paycheck" and I also was directly told that "management could go to MSOE and get an engineer that would do my job for half of what I make so shut up". I and other operators were personally threatened multiple times. Some DNR sample paperwork was having issues (people filled it out wrong) and the head of operations called a meeting with operators and verbatim said "This is jobs on the line shit here, fill it out correctly or there will be consequences". The problem is when that boss

was asked who was making mistakes and what the mistakes were, he didn't know and was clueless. Pressed further he was asked to show operators how to fill out the paperwork and in front of everyone he literally couldn't do it properly. A week later a lab tech from MMSD came down and talked with the operators. The tech was very pleasant, wasn't threatening to fire people, and helped us understand what was wrong/what they were looking for. Most of the managers at the facility had no background in communications, management, or typically waste water. This made it difficult to get thoughts across because it was like talking to a brick wall. I watched many employees be treated like they were idiots by management. Not only employees but management was often treated terribly by corporate. At one point the highest Plant manager at JI was told by a Veolia corporate boss to "Stand in the corner while the adults talk" in a meeting with over 40 plant workers in it, which he did. The level of disrespect was astounding at times.

**Let's talk about direct examples of serious problems I witnessed. I am fully willing to testify in court under the threat of perjury that everything contained here is accurate and actually happened. I believe MMSD/Veolia will deny everything I am going to talk about and I have this to say about that: 1) Unless the person denying what I said was actually on site to witness what I talk about they are not credible, you can't have an opinion on something that wasn't personally seen, and 2) I will provide ideas on where to look for the evidence of what I talk about. I can provide additional information on request, I am willing to sit down and answer any questions to the extent of my knowledge, and I will be truthful/honest about what I know. On a final note what I am going to talk about is only a handful of topics, there are far more that happened/will happen at the facilities. Every current employee with more than a year or two of experience has experienced things like I have, and collectively there would be enough to fill a phone book. I am only covering some of the things I witnessed.**

#### **Bar screen failure, Jones island:**

The preliminary treatment facility at JI uses 8 giant mechanical screens to remove debris out of the waste water. Think of something like a 24 foot tall, 8' wide metal screen that waste water flows through, catching debris like a sewer grate does on the street. Metal rakes that span the width of the screen travel on a chain to clean the screen off and dump the screenings in a hopper with a transport screw that pushes the material to dumpsters to be hauled off. These screens are needed to remove all the debris out of the waste water especially in storms. Combined they can easily remove 80+ yards of debris in one rain event that would otherwise wind up further in the plant process plugging up/damaging equipment, and eventually into lake Michigan. Everything from construction cones, dead animals, and leaves were the screenings. MMSD replaced the old 5 existing screens along with multiple bypass channels in the Preliminary treatment building in the last 10 years. 100% of the 330 millions gallons a day of max capacity flow that goes through JI must pass through these screens, the ONLY exception to this is what's bypassed in a in plant diversion (AKA MMSD decides to "divert" to keep the tunnel from overflowing). There is a significant engineering problem with the "new design" because originally there were multiple bypass channels where flow could be allowed to go through the

screening area in the event of a complete mechanical failure of the bar screens. These bypass channels were eliminated via installing barscreens that didn't exist in those channels. With that understood, let's talk about the major bar screen failure that occurred while I was on site.

I came into work one day and was informed by the operator on duty that one of the 8 bar screens had “blown itself apart”. I went and inspected it and discovered that one of the giant rakes had literally pushed itself through the top of the unit and completely mangled the screen itself along with numerous other rakes. I was not sure how that was possible because there is a overtorque sensor that should have stopped it ( I was later told by a manufacturer rep that the overtorque wasn't hooked up right). The equipment was idled and we were down to 7 screens, which is ok because you could have 2 or 3 screens out and technically still handle 330 MGD of flow (although handling the debris in that flow is questionable). Well that broken bar screen sat for a month or so and another one did the same thing, it blew itself apart. At this point I was starting to worry and management didn't seem to care or be worried. I was worried because if 2 already blew up, and parts could take months to be made to fix them (had to come from Germany),and if more failed it would put the plant in a bind. Over the course of months more screens failed in the exact same way, and at one point I believe 5 out of the 8 screens sat blown apart. This is a major problem because this limits the capacity of what the plant can treat, and on top of it no determination of what was the cause was made at this point. It's an absolute miracle that rains like Milwaukee has had in the last few years didn't hit, because at more than one point the “technical” plant flow limit was 150MGD or under half of what It should have been. This would have led to permit violations in my opinion because more water would have needed to be bypassed/sent to the rivers to prevent the prelim building from flooding.

The reason why this is a significant problem is not because “equipment failures happen” but the fact that this problem in its entirety was likely completely preventable and due to extreme negligence on Veolia's half. Those bar screens were installed by MMSD and handed over to Veolia to maintain. Veolia failed to do any maintenance on the screens or the channels for years. When the screens were being rebuilt a worker from the Huber company (who made the screens) told me directly that the screens were never maintained. I asked him how he knew that and he said “the chain tension was never adjusted from the factory set point and the original metric measurements and markings were present, Nothing was ever adjusted from the factory”. He then asked me if I ever saw anyone working on them and I never did, over the course of years. Not only were the preventative maintenance that was required by the screens not done, but a separate preventative maintenance work order for the channel itself the screen sat in along with the influent and effluent gates to that screen, were never cleaned or worked on.

Once the facility was in dire straits with all this equipment failing, I heard from veolia management that MMSD told veolia they are “on the hook” to pay for everything damaged to be replaced. I have no way of knowing who actually paid for this work, I believe this should be investigated to show Veolia actually paid for this and verify that tax payer money was not used to fix what was a failure due to negligence. The total cost for this work had to be in the millions of dollars, both factory workers from Huber and contractors were on site for over a year rebuilding all of the screens. After this incident work orders existed to maintain the screens (I

know this because I adjusted chain tension on them when I was a machinist apprentice) and work orders existed to clean the channels out to prevent material buildup that would damage the screens.

Where this issue gets worse is currently there is a procurement out from MMSD to rebuild numerous bar screens. The screens themselves are not lasting as long as they should have, or could have. Without going in depth (further into this document I cover the issues of south shore not handling its design capacity) the fact that the deep tunnel tends to never be sent to south shore means that the bar screens at Jones Island have to take care of most of the debris that need to be removed. This means JIs bar screens receive more wear and tear than they should, which results in more frequent parts replacement, which comes out of tax payer money. Evidence that this happened can be easily verified by looking at the historical data on the computerized control system, the HMI (human machine interface) system onsite has backup tapes of all the keystrokes and data. Shift supervisor logs of all the bar screen failures will exist, along with work orders generated to fix them. Internal MMSD messages must exist that talk about veolia “paying for it” because there were numerous meetings between Veolia and MMSD concerning this. I was told that arbitration happened over the bar screen failures, if that’s true some record of it must exist. Plant operators that worked during the year and half this was ongoing would also confirm everything I said.

### **High level screws failures:**

When I was an operator of preliminary treatment equipment known as “high level screws” were replaced. These are absolutely critical pieces of equipment that are needed to bring water from a wet well of one of 2 main sewer lines that feed JI. These “screws” are basically giant augers (google Archimedean screw pump to understand how they work) the size of a city bus. The original ones were wore out, and needed to be replaced. MMSD had a contractor unfamiliar with installing such equipment (I was told so by the people installing them) install the new ones. These screws bring flow to the highest point in the facility so it can flow by gravity all the way through the plant. Without them working, or with them working at reduced capacity, the flow that should go through the plant will end up going into the deep tunnel. Well this project almost ended up in a complete failure. One day I was working High level screw #1 (there are 5) was finished being installed and ready for testing. I (as the operator in charge) was requested by a MMSD contract compliance worker to start the screw. Upon starting the screw I could hear the screw rubbing the concrete underneath it. The MMSD worker seemed concerned, and told me to shut it off, which I did. I told the MMSD worker “Don’t worry, you will call your boss and he will tell you to run it, it will wear in”. The MMSD worker seemed to think I was joking and went to lunch. After lunch I met back with them, and they had a look of puzzle on their face, and they told me “my boss says to just run it, it will wear in”. I said “Yeah, I figured”. This thought process was fairly common on things that didn’t work properly when they were new. At this point I put it in service and it remained in use for a while (somewhere around 6 months or so from what I remember).

Where things take a ugly turn is I was operating preliminary treatment one night and during a routine inspection round I heard an unusual noise in the bar screen area. Upon further inspection the gearbox and motor that powers the “high level screw #1” (which are the size of a small car) were literally rocking back and forth on the concrete pad they were on. I immediately shut down the equipment, and inspected the gearbox/motor. Upon inspection I found numerous bolts were sheared off or completely loose. Based on what I saw the motor/gear box was minutes away from likely spinning off the giant concrete platform which would have likely damaged the gearbox beyond repair, and ripped numerous conduits which could have taken other high level screws out of commission. There was an investigation on this via MMSD, Veolia, and the contractors management. During this bolts for other high level screws were found to be loose or broken. I ended up making a statement to what I saw, and I was told that a lawsuit against the contractor was started. I have no way to verify that but I do know that a worker for the contractor said that the contractor was on the hook for a few million because they failed to “laser align” anything and the screw pumps were all not within tolerance.

This is a great example of one situation (of many similar) where a major screwup happened that could have been prevented. MMSD management seemed to turn a blind eye to the fact something was wrong from the very beginning. The contractor used to install it did not specialize in that type of equipment, I was told by veolia management and onsite machinists that they got “the bid” because they were the only one with enough money in the bank and the manpower to be awarded the job. Had more screw pumps failed due to improper installation it could have limited plant capacity for months if not more. To make matters even worse with these particular screws, they “under performed” vs the old ones. I was involved in testing them to determine how much waste water they could “flow”. I tested them with Veolia management by running one at a time and calculating flow based on numerous flow meters in the plant and channel levels. It was determined that each screw pump would only pump less than the outgoing ones. Therefore a loss in pump capacity resulted in the “new” screw pumps being installed. This could be due to clearance issues between the flights of the screw and the concrete trough they sit in, the fact they have more flights per length than the outgoing ones, or maybe the motors aren't able to keep the same RPM as the old ones. I left before any of this was figured out.

To verify this information Shift supervisor or operator logs can be searched for evidence of the motor almost ripping itself off the concrete could be found. Records of me logging the fact the screw was rubbing the concrete on startup could be found. Talking with other operators and machinists about what they saw would provide additional info. Some record of Veolia, MMSD, and the contractor having meetings/lawsuits/arbitration must exist.

### **Sludge pump grinders and sludge screeners**

In the last 4 years I was at the Jones island facility MMSD decided to do a capital project on the sludge screening system in preliminary treatment. These screens are what filters debris out of the primary sludge. If you put a sewer line into a giant bowl (known as a primary clarifier) and allow things to settle, whatever is the heaviest settles to the bottom of the bowl and is known as

“primary sludge”. The sludge must be screened because it contains a lot of debris and the debris will build up in pipe systems causing issues. Well for some reason Veolia decided since all of the screens were getting replaced, that they just wouldn't do any maintenance on the ones that still existed. This meant that “grinders” were used for significant amounts of time over the course of a year or more. The grinders were designed to be used in an emergency to give the ability to still pump sludge from primary clarifiers while reducing bigger debris to the point they wouldn't significantly contribute towards plugging issues. At numerous points even these failed causing the operators of prelim to just bypass all forms of screening, leaving the debris in the wet well that shouldn't have been.

This is a significant problem because this “sludge” is sent via pumps and a multi mile pipeline to the south shore treatment plant. The reason it is sent to the south shore plant is because they have the only “digesters” that are used to break the sludge down. Through anaerobic digestion Jones Island's sludge is broken down so it is more easily made into fertilizer and the process reduces the volume of gallons the sludge takes up. By not screening this sludge the debris ends up building up on the pipeline and causing plug ups in the digesters/valves/etc. This leads to high pressures in the IPS (interplant piping system) which has directly caused pipe failures and pumps to blow up (read more about this significant problem in a later section titled “IPS failures”). The failure to properly filter sludge has been an on again/ off again problem for the entire time I was at Jones Island. This has most certainly caused a lot of pump failures, piping failures, and additional maintenance time to fix other issues. Digesters lost capacity due to the build up of garbage in them, and had to be idled for cleaning/fix issues, which reduced capacity. Many times it rained, the South shore plant would have zero digester capacity for Jones Island's sludge, which meant that sludge was just dumped into secondary treatment at Jones Island. I am unaware of any treatment plant in the state that does this. First off it negatively affects the solids loading (aka it builds up solids in the plant), it can affect settling of the sludge in secondary (aka when plant waste water flows are high due to rain it becomes difficult to keep those solids in the plant because they float and don't settle, causing unnecessary pollutants/debris to go into the lake). Secondly that unbroken down sludge is not ideal for the milorganite facility to make fertilizer out of and the higher concentration of it in secondary sludge lead to equipment issues in my experience.

The failure to properly screen sludge has been going on for more than a few years in the last 10 years. It can be verified by looking at the records of the HMI system to see what sludge screeners are actually available, or running. Any time the grinders or bypass valve is open the IPS and digester system is actively being harmed via trash. Operator and Shift supervisor logs along with current/former plant operators being questioned will confirm this.

### **IPS pumps and system failures**

The “Interplant Pumping System” is a critical asset that interconnects Jones Island to south shore and south shore to Jones Island. These 3 pumps (which each consist of two centrifugal pumps) exist at both facilities that are used for transferring of “solids” between the plants. Jones Island has 3 of these pumps (and historically speaking) only one was ever available to use and

the other two were either blown up, or otherwise broken. Under normal operations Digested sludge and Secondary sludge (WAS or Waste activated sludge) is sent using this system from S.S. to JI to the thickening building (which is in turn sent to the milorganite facility to be turned into milorganite. Jones Island sends primary sludge to S.S. to be broken down in their digesters. Since I started at JI this system has been problematic continuously. Everything from

catastrophic pump failures, plugs in the line, excessive line pressures, leaks, and total line outages were common. Maintenance on the piping system itself (multiple miles worth) has been minimal, and mostly consisted of flushing water for hours/days to "loosen things up". Occasionally (only 2 times I can remember) a contractor was brought in and foam "pigs" or scouring devices were sent down the lines to help clean the walls from debris to keep the pressures low. In both cases they were unsuccessful in having the "pig" actually reach the other facility on the line, and in one case the pig got "stuck" causing the line to be taken out of service for years. I was told when I started by plant operators with over 20 years of experience that "pigging" used to be done frequently and that it was stopped completely. The piping system was designed for this, it had what was known as "pig launchers" where the scouring process could be easily set up and done. The lack of line maintenance combined with the excessive bypassing of JI primary sludge filtering filled the pipeline with solids that settled out. This became worse as JI would often only be able to send sludge for 4 hours a day (rather than over 12 hours) due to S.S. digesters not being available/being full constantly. This ultimately led to all the debris settling out in the pipe which likely caused buildup, and the JI IPS pumps running at 240PSI constantly rather than then the 140 psi or less they routinely ran at for the first few years I operated the facility. The high pressures started causing the pipes to blow up/leak in the field (thus causing geysers of raw sewage sludge in peoples backyards in st francis) and at the facility. Management decided for years that the solution to these lines leaking was to use cookie sheets, caulk, and literal "magic wrap" (tape that's sold at stores to repair broken yard tool handles) as a "fix". Until MMSD came in and replaced some of the in building lines this was the literal fix for leaks that would spray 12+ feet and flood the basement of thickening out at times. This whole situation became an even more significant problem because the pumps themselves started literally blowing up, and throwing parts of the pump 20+ feet. One of them blew up with a contractor nearby, who could have been killed by the debris, it's a miracle they weren't harmed. At one point all 3 of these pumps were blown up and preliminary treatment had no way to waste their sludge to the digesters for over a month. This forced Veolia to waste all primary sludge to secondary treatment and directly to the milorganite facility which caused a buildup in plant solids, settling issues in secondary treatment, and milorganite facility equipment issues. These reliability problems played a role in the permit violation JI had 8 years ago as well.

I wish I could say this is "water under the bridge" but I was notified by current plant operators that a IPS pump just blew up again at the JI facility. This would bring the total times these pumps catastrophically failed to over 6 times in the last 12 years. Excessive line pressure, excessive wear and tear due to pumping unscreened sludge, and likely inadequate teardown/maintenance is to blame for this. For as often as the pumps failed you would think they would have a spare motor and pump available, but at no point was this the case. As one

pump failed the other two would be used and the blown up one would be out for 4 months to years or more. This can be verified by looking in the supervisor/operator logs, the records of the equipment in the HMI system logs, talking with plant operators, and even reading about what the DNR told MMSD when they blew the permit. From what I remember the WI DNR stated something to the effect that they had serious concerns over the status of the IPS system, likely because they realized how it was affecting the plants ability to control solids loading. I have heard that south shores pumps had just as many problems and a S.S. operator could fill the details in on this.

### **South shore contract violation:**

MMSD and veolia seem to like to avoid mentioning the contract violation Veolia had in 2017 at South Shore which was the precursor for their blowing permit at Jones island. The WI DNR sets WPEDS permit limits for both plants. Permit limits include how much chlorine, how much suspended solids, how high of fecal levels (which accurately predict things like e-coli), etc can be discharged into the lakes/streams. MMSD sets a contract that is lower than the permit levels. Well in 2017 Veolia was fined 151,000 dollars for violating the contract with MMSD. Technically this is not a permit violation, however it shows that Veolia didn't operate the plants properly. Around the time South Shore blew the contract the facility was in shambles. The plant itself had significant sludge settling issues that were going on for months. Anytime the flow exceeded 80 million gallons a day it would start to "spew" into the lake, AKA excessive solids were released. This is why they limited capacity at the plant for so long, they couldn't contain the solids mass in the plant along with stay under control for fecal numbers/other discharge levels. These issues were going on for years prior to the contract violation. South shore was a running joke at Jones island.. Daily JI plant operators would watch the lab test results show up in the "hach wims" data system awaiting the fact they were going to blow the contract. I saw photos that were sent to me from that facility of how bad their discharge looked like (think of brown chocolate milk instead of clear water). More than a few times that facility was going to blow a monthly average contract for something on say the 30th day of the month, and somehow their numbers were low enough on the 31st day that the monthly average was "under" the limit. I don't say this with one bit of exaggeration, it's an absolute miracle they didn't blow multiple contracts/permits. To make matters worse, in a week or two before SS blew the contract, there was talks about taking sludge from JI's secondary plant, pumping sludge into tanker trucks, driving the trucks to south shore, and pumping that sludge into the plant to provide "healthy micro organisms" to the SS plant. This could have likely improved the discharge at the plant and I was directly told by management it costs too much money because it would be around 40-50,000\$. Well days before they violated the contract (basically too late to get a high probability of a positive change) they went ahead and did the sludge transfer/aka Reseeded the SS plant. To my knowledge it did actually improve their discharge numbers, but not enough/fast enough to prevent a contract violation. They were so concerned over the trucking fee cost that had they just paid it and done it sooner it might have saved them the 151K fine. From that day forward that SS facility never took any reasonable amount of flow in a rain event. The plant was designed to handle 300 million gallons a day and for over 9 years since (and even more) the

flow going into the plant would be cut back to 45-100mgd anytime it rained. This left JI to handle all of the rain water, debris, and solids material.

All of this can be verified by looking at the Lab data around the time of the contract violation. Look at the raw daily numbers and come to a personal conclusion as to how close that facility was to blowing permit or contract for a long time prior to when they blew the contract. That facility was in shambles and still is to a large extent. Talking with former and current plant operators will fill in lots of info as to what was really going on down there. I believe the root causes as to why they had so many issues was major digester problems (capacity and availability), IPS line/pump issues that prevented transfer of sludge, Milorganite facility equipment outages that reduced what they could waste, constant power outages, excessive workloads/hours on plant workers, Management that had no idea what they were doing, and the waste that they treat sits in the sewers for so long it turns septic. Also of interest is that facility used what's known as "RAS chlorination", or in basic terms they tried killing undesirable microorganisms in their plant sludge with chlorine. This is a well known method to help get a plant under control with settling issues, it is not something you should do continuously for months at high doses in an "operating strategy". Look at the chlorine usage of that facility and the logs for how much they were chlorinating their sludge. Jones island has done it a handful of times for a few days each time, over the last 15+ years. South shore did it continuously for weeks or more at 3-4 times the dose rate that JI ever did. This just pushed the problems down the road instead of fixing them, and possibly led to an unhealthy microorganism population in the plant which further led to inability to control the discharge levels of pollutants.

### **South shore plant capacity issues**

There is no way around this fact: South Shore waste water plant historically has not been operated anywhere near the capacity it was designed for. When I started as a JI prelim operator the South shore Facility would take 300 million gallons in 24 hours during a rain storm. Within a few years the plant was so unhealthy it would start spewing solids out of the plant into the lake at 50MGD. Countless times I ran the JI facility it would be taking 330MGD while SS was at 45-50mgd with the influent gates pinched back to take no additional flow. 50 MGD is their normal plant flow, so basically at the worst they wouldn't be able to handle ANY rain flow. It became a running joke at JI if the south shore facility would ever see 100 MGD during a rain, and keep in mind its designed capacity was 300, or 3 times that. The major issue with this is whatever the SS facility didn't allow into/process in the plant, would wind up in the deep tunnel system. To further understand how this limited capacity lets look at numbers: During rain if you have 500 million gallons in the tunnel/sewer system in 24 hours that means in 24 hours South shore would handle/process 50-70mgd, jones island would handle 330mgd and the tunnel would still have 100 million in it after 24 hours. If the south shore facility could handle 300mgd there would be nothing in the tunnel. The problem compounds because If it rained again the next day the same amount the tunnel would have 200 MGD in it and now that's half full. Because deep tunnel pumps were generally not sent to south shore (only to JI), that means if JI

was running at 330MGD full capacity the water sat in the tunnel taking up space. This meant that the tunnel sat with far more combined sewer water in it than it should have, took longer to pump out than it should have, and all the debris in that water ended up being removed by the screening systems at JI. For over a Decade the south shore facilities capacity limit has caused more wear and tear on all JI plant systems, especially the Bar screens. Processing all of that tunnel water took a serious toll on the secondary treatment/biological process at JI and is a significant direct cause of why JI blew permit in 2018.

This reduced capacity also lead to 3 interesting situations: 1) Combined sewer overflows lasted a longer time then the would have with the plant being able to take capacity, 2) it caused a long “detention time” of the waste in the sewer system that fed south shore, which led to the waste turning septic due to time without oxygen, and 3) I am certain it led to Combined sewer overflows/diversions that wouldn't have been done otherwise. The decision to start an inplant diversion and CSOs in the field is based on how full the tunnel is, how much rain has fallen/is projected to fall, current plant capacities, and a few other factors. Well for literally over a decade south shore has been run under capacity, therefore the tunnel system has universally had more in it than it should have. When the decision to do a CSO/diversion is made, they generally stopped it when the tunnel system was reduced to the point it could be pumped out via using the two treatment plants before the next rain would hit. Well what could have been done in a day or two with the south shore running at capacity became 4 to 5 days straight of bypassing the tunnel contents into the lake. Due to the nature of how unique every rain event is (how much rain, how fast it hits the ground, how saturated the ground is, how healthy the treatment plants are, etc) its difficult to say just how much more combined sewer water was discharged than what could have been. In simple terms whatever south shore actually took vs design capacity (say they only took 100 MGD in a day, that means 200 million gallons could have been treated) multiplied by the days a diversion/CSO was going on, would be a rough number. I was on for 2-3 day long diversions where south shore only processed around 230MGD total in 72 hours, instead of the 900mgd they should have, or approximately 670 million gallons in total was discharged that could have been “treated”. Keep in mind this would be a perfect situation, in reality the numbers would likely be closer to 400-500 million gallons based on the limitations of how fast flow can get to south shore and sewer system limits. Also keep in mind that in big rains even with south shore running at capacity there would still be diversions/CSOs, the large amount of water will still overwhelm the treatment plants. However I am positive that past ones could have been shorter in duration and volume if South shore could have taken design capacity. At some point I am sure that a decision to divert/start CSO would have not been made if south shore operated at capacity.

Speaking of south shores capacity, I find it odd that on MMSD's own website it always showed Jones islands capacity at 330mgd, and south shores plant at 300. Yet in rain events when you loaded the page it would show 50-90mgd going through south shore max, despite the capacity being listed at 300mgd. MMSD didnt seem to ever advertise how limited the south shore facility was anywhere. I am not sure why this was but its deceitful in my opinion. Look at the historical records for the south shore treatment plant and see how for over a decade that facility was never anywhere near its capacity limit. Even if they did hit say 250mgd it would be

for an hour or two before massively dropping it. Compare that data to the Jones Island influent and there is a completely different story. JI was run at capacity with complete disregard for anything, unless buildings were flooding into the streets at the facility they didn't cut flow. Even when they were blowing DNR permit for over 12 hours continuously they did not cut flow.

South shore digester availability when I started was unlimited, I could waste primary sludge from prelim anytime I needed to and unlimited amounts, which kept that undesirable sludge out of the JI plant and processed properly. Within a few years South shore had continuous digester availability problems. Things went from being able to pump 4 hours on 4 off for weeks on end at 400gpm, to pumping 2-4 hours a day and getting a phone call from south shore to shut it down because there was no "availability". Before pumping I would look at a control monitor at JI in the supervisors office to look at what their "available digester capacity was". Apparently that number was fictitiously high, because it never correlated with what they actually had available. I never operated at that plant however I am familiar with their equipment because I was a security guard down there and walked the facilities daily. My understanding of the capacity issues that started after I was hired were due to the following: Digesters being taken out of service due to being unfit for use, failure to operate the plate and frame building which could allow for making of sludge cake to land dispose of (Aka a way for them to waste solids from the plant to control solids loading without relying on JI), and not operating thickening equipment on site that could reduce the volume of the sludge in the digesters via removal of water. Plant operators at that facility (especially ones that are aware of how it operated before things started going downhill) will have the key to ALL of the reasons the digesters stopped functioning properly.

### **Why south shore facility stopped being able to take max capacity:**

MMSD and Veolia seem to be confused about why the South shore facility has a reduced capacity, and they both seem to think it's not an issue. As outlined already, yes it was a major issue because it extended CSO/diversions, it caused excessive equipment wear at JI, and caused excessive solids to build up at JI leading to the permit violation of 2018. The question is not "is there a problem" but "why is there a problem". Based on what I know of that facility I have a couple ideas, they are as follows: 1) The plant was not operated as it should have been. The solids control was reduced via changes in operation of the digesters, plate and frame building, sludge thickening processes, and significant plant maintenance issues such as failure to maintain aeration basins/piping/other equipment. 2) Inexperienced management staff made bad decisions. South shore was a running joke for decades and managers at JI did not want to go down to that facility for fear they would get fired. Numerous managers from JI were forced to go down there and would later quit, and in at least one case a manager refused to go to that plant and because of it they were held out of future promotions. Plant conditions were so bad there for years that the stress contributed to an absurdly high turnover rate. Ask Veolia to provide manager names that ran that plant and that alone would show the inexperience level of the management staff. The IPS system outages and pump issues, combined with Milorganite facility outages/inability to operate at high enough levels to take care of the solids both plants produced in a controlled manner also caused major issues at that plant. Also they stopped

pumping the tunnel pump to the facility every other night which could have possibly improved the plant conditions due to the water diluting the influent to the plant.

I have heard over the years that MMSD claims “high strength waste” and/or “toxic chemicals are in the sewer that feeds south shore, and this is why the plant is at reduced capacity. Here is the problem with this: Over 8 years ago I and another field maintenance worker took at least 20 samples from main sewers that feed south shore and gave them to MMSD. If there was a company(ies) that was dumping material that would affect the microorganisms there, they would have known about it for over 8 years. If the incoming waste water is septic they would know where it becomes septic and could have at least come up with a plan to solve it. Yes its absolutely true that the south shore facility treats a lot of the waste from the far north side of Milwaukee and thus the waste water takes a lot longer to reach the facility, making it naturally more prone to becoming septic. However this reduced capacity issue has been going on for longer than a decade, which is absolutely ridiculous considering how much effect it has on the system as a whole. I have heard that MMSD is upgrading certain parts of the piping system at SS currently in order to try to help with plant operational issues, and that the plant actually took 270mgd during the major rains this year. Those are good things, but they are unlikely to permanently solve the issues mentioned thus far at that plant and this needs to be monitored closely because the flow limiting is not simply a case of “having no effect” on anything MMSD/Veolia seem to think.

### **Permit violation at JI in 2018:**

Much to the dismay of Veolia, the Jones Island treatment plant Violated DNR permit in 2018. Make no mistake, this was not something that “happened out of the blue” this was literally months in the making. I was the secondary operator in charge the day they blew permit, and technically the permit was blown on my shift. What happened is not what was released to the media, and what I am going to write is the truth. Leading up to the permit violation the conditions of the JI facility were abysmal. They had solids loading levels in the treatment plant that had never historically been hit (5,000 to 6,000 milligrams a liter of suspended solids). Settling tests of the sludge in the plant showed literally nothing would settle (30 minute settling of 800 for those who know settling tests). In simple terms the organic material/plant solids were at unsafe levels and if the flow was increased they would not be able to be contained in the plant without “spewing out of the plant”. Spewing is generally not a desired thing because the discharge out of the plant to lake Michigan is monitored and you can blow permits due to high solids. For over a few months prior to the permit violation plant conditions went from bad to worse, back to bad and then worse. South shore was in rough shape, and refused to take any flow, which left JI to take everything. JI plant problems with the thickening building, IPS system, and the Milorganite facility made it impossible to reduce the solids in the plant. There was talks of Veolia bringing in rail cars/semis and start producing sludge cake in the D+D facility for landfill disposal because that was a possible option to get rid of some of the solids. This was never historically done to my knowledge but might have worked. It wasn't done though so it's hard to say if it would have been effective.

The night before the day they blew permit it was pouring rain, and I was working. The flow in the plant came up and I could literally see the waste water that was leaving the plant turn brown. The settling clarifiers in secondary treatment couldn't contain the solids, and they were leaving the plant. The only thing at this point that would solve the issue was to back flow off, but this wasn't going to happen. South shore was also in rough shape and historically they didn't hit above 100mgd at that time, even in rain. I notified the shift supervisor of plant conditions around 1am and he didn't seem surprised. In the days previous managers made jokes about "if we let a bit spew it would only help us out", aka pushing solids into the lake meant they didn't have to be removed from the plant via the miloganite facility. Well what nobody realized is how bad things would become. At 5am on the day the violation occurred I was relieved of my duties by the day operator, went to bed, and came back at about 4:45pm. Upon walking into the control room I was told by the day operator the following: "management said you have to pass chlorine permit". In simple terms the facility had been discharging chlorine levels above permit limits from 5-6am all the way to 5pm when I got there. I didn't understand at this time why it wasn't fixed at 5pm 11 to 12 hours after it was known that the plant was in violation. I ended up testing the chlorine levels going into the lake, and they were indeed still in violation at 5:30pm. Now the reason for the excessive levels is actually complex. It could have been due to flow meter errors on the chlorine pumps, somehow chlorine was gravity feeding to disinfection, etc. The sodium bisulfite that's used to neutralize the chlorine could have been a bad batch, not getting to where it needed to to neutralize the chlorine, or any number of other problems. I spent over an hour verifying everything I could, and came to one conclusion: for some reason the chlorine was not able to be neutralized by the bisulfite and that the reading was likely accurate. Nothing I did (like increasing bisulfite flow) lowered the chlorine level in the final effluent. At about 6-6:30pm the prelim building started flooding, with literal rivers running out of open doors. Based on what I saw on a HMI machine it appeared as though the bar screens had failed, likely what happened is they plugged up with debris and became a restriction to flow, and with nowhere to go the waste water ran like a river into the street. At this point I knew things weren't good, and I notified the supervisor on site that I didn't pass the permit test.

Throughout the night I never stopped making constant adjustments to get the chlorine numbers down. At some point around 8pm the operations supervisor called the shift supervisor and told me I have to find some way to get it to pass. I told him he has to cut the flow to the plant, it's the only way things will clear up. He refused and said that isn't an option. Not soon after they increased the flow to the plant, and the conditions worsened. At 11:50pm I was on the phone with the operations supervisor while on the shift supervisor's phone, in the laboratory for testing chlorine. I ran multiple tests, and none passed, the chlorine levels were too high. I was honestly waiting for the operations supervisor to tell me to just lie on the paperwork and say it passed (more on that later) but he didn't. When the clock hit midnight I knew that things completely changed, the facility officially recorded a permit violation. I was unable to get the levels of chlorine to become out of violation status for the rest of my shift, from what I remember. I believe they finally came under control when the flow dropped off the next day on day shift. What wasn't known at this time is the facility had actually blown two permits, one for residual chlorine, and one for excessive solids in the discharge to lake michigan.

Ultimately this incident led to firing of the day shift secondary operator opposite of me (who did nothing wrong, and got her job back) and the firing of the prelim operator who was on when the building flooded (who was fired because veolia said they were “unsafe for entering the flooding building to reset the equipment), who also ultimately got their job back). The head of operations was demoted, and a plant manager who was on vacation (and not even at the facility at the time) was fired. I was pulled into an office days after the incident and told I am receiving a write up because I failed to document test results. Now I sent an email with all the test results I had, and when I said that to the bosses they said to me “that’s something to bring up at your grievance hearing”. Ultimately the grievance hearing happened and management agreed to throw it out immediately and laughed about it. I heard numerous bosses lost bonuses, and were reprimanded/threatened. Not soon after the violation day I (and all other “Wet end operators”) were forced to sign a document that says we were properly trained and that we have read all SOPs/operations books for our positions (multiple phone book sided books). It was made clear if I or anyone else did not sign the document we would be terminated. There was no training given, there wasn’t even a meeting about what happened. Literally multiple people got fired, over 100,000\$ in fines, and not one meeting with operators to discuss anything that ever happened. The extent of what was requested from me was a simple statement of what I saw, and then nothing else. The reason I bring this up is because what was released to the news was not really what happened. And it’s to give proof that the way the facilities operated directly caused pollution of the lake. It’s also to set the tone on how out of control the facilities were run during my time there. Veolia knew why the permit was blown (because they were operating the facilities poorly) and they didn’t want to hear any input about it. All of this can be verified by talking with the operators that were onsite during the permit violation, looking at logs, etc.

Now there is an “icing on the cake” of this permit violation, It is the single biggest contributor towards positive change at the facility. After the permit violation MMSD workers were seen more often and more of them were at the facility. Many things such as the non functional grit removal system at JI were fixed by veolia. Veolia management seemed to be more willing to listen to what operators said, and didn’t seem to sit around not making decisions on what to do as much. However at the same time the morale within management seemed to suffer, as did workers at the plant. I believe had this not happened when it did it would have happened soon after. The facility was a mess and it was inevitable. The fact it only happened one time and when it did is more of a miracle and not because things were done right.

### **Chlorine shenanigans**

I am bringing what I call "chlorine shenanigans" up because I really don't know what to say about it. When the JI plant violated the permit they were in violation as of 5:30am violation day, basically when the first final effluent chlorine test was done. From 5:30 am until midnight that entire day, the plant was in violation of chlorine residual in the final effluent. The WI DNR and plant operating manuals specifically state that the final effluent chlorine test must be done every day at some point in 24 hours, and when it's taken it is either a pass or fail. They specifically state that once the test is decided to be taken, the result (pass or fail) must be

recorded. If it's a failure (excessive detectable chlorine), you perform an interference test to verify it's not something else that's causing a false positive. If it still fails after the interference test you have a permit violation on your hands. This is my understanding of what the DNR requires and how I was trained. Now this is not how the facility operated up to the point of the permit violation, or afterwards. Prior to the permit violation the standard was if the final test failed (keep in mind its basically 0 detectable chlorine and even an unbelievably small amount was in it the test would be a failure) you were to do an interference test. If it failed again you would adjust the dechlorination bisulfite dose and retest in 20 minutes or so. I brought this up to management as being against permit and asked why it wasn't in the SOP training manuals and received a laugh from an operations supervisor. Along with a response of "you know we can't put that in the manual", which basically confirmed that it was wrong.

Now realistically with the way the plant operated and the massive flow swings (when tunnel pumps dropped off the flow would go from say 150mgd to 40), would cause excessive chlorine levels to build up in disinfection because the dose rate was under the assumption of 150mgd. In simple terms the system would drop the dosage of chlorine when the plant flow dropped, but the dose that already exists in the water flowing into the lake was high. The bisulfite chemical that's used to dechlorinate the discharge would also drop based on the flow dropping, but the amount of chlorine that already existed in the water hadn't dropped. This would lead to spikes in chlorine levels that were difficult to eliminate because they were unpredictable. This is likely the reason why an unwritten rule of retesting was used, despite it likely being a permit violation. Where things get confusing to me is when Veolia installed a second sink in the final effluent building with the purpose of "peaking at the plant effluent". The general rule that was explained to me was anything that's tested out of the final effluent sink that does not pass for chlorine levels is considered a fail/knowledge of a violation. Their solution to get around this was to install a second sink (thats not a listed sample point on their WPDES permit) that pulls final effluent from a few feet away from the permit sink (which the sample is for it is for all practical purposes the same exact thing as the permit sink). Veolia then trained operators to do a chlorine test from this new sink and only if it passes there do they test the permit sink. I am not honestly sure if this is allowed by the DNR, it seems to me if you have knowledge of permit violation levels of chlorine there would be a problem. Just because it didn't come from an official sink is somewhat of a moot point.

The reason I bring this up is because when they violated the permit I 100% believe if at any point the final chlorine test had passed, management would have instructed me to record a pass for the day, despite knowingly being in violation for over 12+ hours. By having a second sink (which I believe still exists, it did as of 2 years ago) it could allow for "shennagains" with testing where the plant could knowingly be in violation for hours but still have a clean bill of health. The legality of this needs to be looked into because of the possibility of misuse. This can be verified by talking with secondary operators and verifying the second sink still exists (it did when I left 2 years ago).

### **D+D installed screws**

When I worked in the milorganite facility as maintenance for a year or so about 8 years ago, I saw many questionable things. A significant amount of equipment was being replaced which was good. However the new equipment was failing at an alarming rate. Many very new screw conveyors had ceramic tiles attached to the flights, and they were falling off in sheets. This would cause the screws to wear out extremely fast and fail (aka they wouldn't push much material/jam because of excessive wear/tiles getting caught). I witnessed all brand new dryer feed screws being installed by s MMSD contractor, and upon startup the gearbox/motor assemblies were wobbling and literally bending the 3/8th thick steel they were mounted to like it was taffy. I asked the contractor what was going on with them, and I was told "Some of them do that, the city signed off its out of our hands". I actually have videos of this, available upon request. I am not sure what happened with them since I got promoted soon after, but I believe many catastrophically failed. Maybe the screw manufacturer replaced them and paid for labor? Like most things at the facility, who actually paid for things is flat out unknown. This wasn't a one off, much of the new equipment that MMSD installed in the milorganite facility was sub par. It often didn't work as good as the old equipment did, and it wasn't uncommon to have completely failed new equipment within days or weeks of install. This can be verified by looking at work orders for those assets and talking to the operators of the milorganite facility.

### **D+D dust collection motor shenanigans**

One of the last jobs I ever did at the facilities was replacing the dust collection motor in the milorganite facility. I don't remember if the motor was for the house vac system but I believe it was. Anyway, the motor caught fire and was put out. A machinist and I investigated and figured out the bearings were never greased (it became a debate of what departments was responsible for failure to grease it). Well the motor was destroyed and a replacement was around something like 40K from what I heard. A maintenance employee in the building remembered that when the machine was put in by MMSD, a spare motor was supplied with it. Veolia management looked in inventory and no motor existed. The maintenance worker was able to locate the motor and it indeed was a match. This is a best case situation, it could be fixed fairly easily and fast. Where the problem is, veolia managers told workers to not mention anything to MMSD workers about the motor. MMSD didn't know it existed, and Veolia was going to send MMSD a bill for the motor. Well MMSD workers found out and put a stop to it immediately. Veolia management seemed disappointed that MMSD found out.

I bring this up because this again isn't a one off situation. It was commonplace for veolia to take parts off other equipment to fix one piece of equipment. I have no idea how this was

tracked. Considering the volume of work done at the plants I don't know how it would be possible to accurately track costs with equipment parts. Let alone how MMSD would know what Veolia actually spent money on. This can be verified by talking with the workers that were present for that job 2 years ago.

### **Deep tunnel clamming problems:**

The deep tunnel has a lot of debris that collects in the end that's directly under the Jones Island facility. There is an overhead bridge crane that is used to remove the material from a pit that exists at the end of the tunnel, its known as the "clamming crane" due to the clam shell bucket design. Using the crane to remove material from the tunnel is a requirement of veolia, because the debris can wind up in the deep tunnel pumps which causes excessive wear and vibrations of the pumps, along with overloading/damaging prelims bar screens. Well for significant amounts of time veolia refused to clam. Due to understaffing the operators that are trained to do the work weren't available to do the work unless they were paid overtime. Veolia didn't want to pay overtime so they just had no one clam. They would go months at a time without clamming anything and then when someone such as me would do it, 2-3 days worth still wouldn't remove all the material. The higher the pile of debris got in the tunnel the more likely it was to get into the pumps and cause wear. When I started operating the crane it was in such poor shape that electrical conduit was rotted out and hanging on wires, windows would fall out of the cab, and generally speaking it would last for 3-4 hours and then require a day of work from trades to fix due to anything from a failed limit switch to blown power feed wires. Luckily MMSD upgraded the cab to one that worked properly, which made the job easier/more reliable. However that didn't fix the problem of Veolia not paying for people to run it. This can be verified by operator paperwork for how many dumpsters were pulled, and likely MMSD memos regarding this. I say that because I was told by veolia management that "they got their rear ends chewed out over not clamming", aka apparently MMSD noticed they didn't do it and forced them to.

### **Grit removal system problems:**

Most of what I talked about are things I have seen in the last 10 years, this is something that was absolutely ridiculous that happened about 13 years ago. When I originally started in Prelim as an operator, they had no grit removal system. For those who don't know, grit is road gravel and hard debris that don't easily break down. It must be removed as soon as possible in the treatment process because its so abrasive it wears out all pumps and piping in plants. Well The entire grit system was set for a capital project. Because it was set for MMSD replacement, Veolia stopped 100% of all maintenance on the system, so there was no grit removal for over a year. During rain events the grit would plug up all of the primary clarifier pumps, destroy the primary sludge screens, and cause debris buildups in the digesters at south shore. Apparently MMSD found out they weren't maintaining it, and ordered veolia to do something about it. A Veolia manager told me that "MMSD broke their foot off in his rear end" over the fact the system wasn't running, and that told him just because something was a capital project isn't a reason to stop fixing something. The unfortunate thing with this situation is that weekend two steam fitters

were brought in and in less than 8 hours they got the whole system working with all the pumps pumping. Literally all grit removal for a year didn't happen over a single 8 hour days worth of work for two people. I as the prelim operator was told by management that the equipment was beyond use and wouldn't work at all.

### **The mighty putty problems of the milorganite facility:**

I will keep this short and simple: The milorganite facility has been and likely is still held together with "mighty putty", or epoxy putty that comes in a tube. When I worked maintenance in the facility the cure all for all leaks was simply to spend days on end mixing it and patching equipment. It became a nightmare of a problem because safety would come into the building and get angry over the condition of the floors (aka milorganite all over them making slip hazards) but nothing would ever be done to fix the big leaks. 8 hours of using might putty would only last for a week or two before it wore out, and new leaks started. I started taking pictures every day of what areas looked like when I was done to keep management from accusing me (and other workers) of not cleaning areas. I witnessed management use cookie pans, caulk, and duct tape to lessen leaks. Very rarely were machinists allowed to weld in patches to actually fix the worn out equipment, it was run until failure and then MMSD would turn it into a capital project.

### **Store room stock levels**

When I started at the facility the onsite storeroom had significant stock of all sorts of parts for the facility. Within 4 years most of the parts were gone, and not replaced. I was told (by people that trained me that had been there for 30+ years) at one time there were spare parts for almost everything at the facility. Veolia made the decision to rely on buying all parts as needed rather than plan for the future by having stock on hand, and this has led to unbelievable wait time for parts. As an operator I was constantly told by management "parts are on order" but I had no way to know if A) the parts were actually ordered or B) how long it would take to get them. It became a running joke that "its on order" because it became a code for its not getting fixed so stop talking about it. I am not sure if this is better today than two years ago when I left, but I doubt anything has changed.

### **MMSDs signing off on things being done but they weren't functional.**

This was a serious problem that I experienced the entire time I was at Veolia. MMSD would use inexperienced people to sign off on contractors work, and a plant operator's signature that things worked properly was never required. This led to equipment being turned over to Veolia that didn't work, worked at reduced capacity, or failed quickly. I can't overstate how significant of a problem this was because once something MMSD put in failed, Veolia wouldn't touch it/fix it. Warranty periods seemed to be literally as soon as the MMSD signed off there

was no warranty. Even things that supposedly had warranties would fail, and 6 months or a year would go by before anything was done. If a contractor did shoddy work on a new piece of equipment I have literally seen plant trades workers fix it, and I don't know who paid for it. It's possible Veolia billed MMSD for this work.

### **Platinum award wining/contract compliance word play:**

MMSD and Veolia like to bring up their status with permit violations and contract compliance as some form of proof everything is fine. The problem with this is it has nothing to do with the maintenance of the facilities.. It is absolutely true, they have met permits 99% of the time. This doesn't tell the story of how close they were countless times to plant disasters, blowing contract/permits, or how much money has been wasted in the tug-of-war on who's going to pay for broken equipment. It doesn't say they have been efficient (in both time and money) at fixing equipment. It doesn't mean they treat people well. Yes technically they are in compliance with almost all previous Combined sewer overflows/diversions, however that doesn't mean those diversions could have been significantly smaller (or not happened) if south shore was running at capacity. The true reason MMSD/Veolia has been able to get away with what's going on is due to two reasons 1) the public isn't aware of what's going on/nobody knows enough to put a end to it and 2) the jones island facility was engineered so well and is so oversized its able to handle conditions that no other plant in the state (or probably most of the US) could. The JI facility has been able to handle circumstances that would have crippled a normal waste water plant. Mostly due to the original engineering being so good and the workers doing everything they could to keep a sinking ship afloat.

### **My thoughts thus far:**

Keep in mind what I have talked about thus far is only what I have personally seen or witnessed. I was one of 180 or so workers. Everyone on site has seen similar or worse things I am sure. I don't have enough knowledge of the South shore facility to accurately talk about much of what was going on there, but I am sure its as bad as Jones Island. I have also left out countless pages I could write of more specific instances of pure negligence (such as the "head tank spill" that was likely a permit violation at JI, at least 20 specific failures with things like sludge pumps, sump pumps, the scum system, etc). I didn't even talk about the fact numerous health studies were done on air quality workers were exposed to and veolia withheld the study results. At some point the limit to the info I am going to share has to be found, and I am at it. So now let's move onto what to do about all of this and what my final thoughts are.

### **How to fix the problems**

It's one thing to sit and complain about all the problems and another thing to have suggestions on how to fix things. I believe there are many ways to fix the problems at the facilities, some are easy and others are difficult. I will list some now:

- 1) The work order system needs to be simplified without all the points system. If something is broken or needs work, it needs work. Yes there can be different priorities to how important something is, that can easily be accommodated as "critical" or "non critical". If something reduces the plant capacity, is involved with anything due to permits, or health/safety, etc, its critical. If the broken piece of equipment is the only redundancy to something, its critical. An easy to access program needs to exist where people can access a list of what pieces of equipment in their department are currently "written up". Operator logs don't work because if a work order got rejected or disappeared nobody would often know. This list shall be maintained by veolia and they shall be held accountable by MMSD for it. Operators and maintenance will without question know what's actually in the system and what's not.
- 2) All work orders require an operator signature that the work was done right and the asset is returned back to normal operating conditions. Simply requiring an operator to sign off that something works properly after a repair would put an end to improper fixes and reduced service. Operators shall not be forced to sign off on things as being fixed when they aren't, and shouldn't be punished for refusal to sign. This includes new equipment installed by MMSD, signoffs should be required that they work properly.
- 3) Minimum staffing levels must be determined by MMSD and shall be published at all information boards. This is the staffing levels that Veolia Shall maintain. No more of eliminating positions and playing games with staffing levels. It's understandable that people switch jobs and vacancies exist. Its unacceptable to have vacancies for 6+ months and so few employees that plants go unmanned. It's also unacceptable to force unqualified managers to run operator jobs. If coverage is an issue, more employees shall be hired and trained to help cover vacancies. More than enough work exists for more employees if management comes up with work for them to do. Much of the perceived "operators sit around and do nothing" at the plants is due to management giving zero directive for what they should do. There is plenty of work to do at both facilities.
- 4) MMSD should be investigated to determine why they have so many employees and if it makes sense to have that many. Currently from the records MMSD has 250 Direct employees, which is more than both Jones island, South shore, and Field maintenance combined. When you remove all of management from the lists that are actually on site of the plants, the number of people actually "doing the work" to run/fix the facilities becomes impossibly small. I believe there is simply too much overhead and not enough money is making it to the facility where it counts.

- 5) Accountability.. This is a huge problem. Something needs to be done to force accountability. If MMSD installs a piece of equipment that doesn't work properly, this must be dealt with quickly. IF contractors do shoddy work, they must be held accountable. If Veolia decides to stop fixing things because the city is replacing it, that must be stopped. For the 14 years I was on site there was no way to contact MMSD, to report problems, and workers were told to just deal with everything as it was. This can't continue.
- 6) Operator involvement in both MMSD and Veolia projects. During the entirety of my time at the island, only one time (that I can remember) I was asked what my thoughts were on something by a MMSD employee. MMSD made so many foolish mistakes because they A) didn't understand what they were dealing with, and B) never considered the input from operators/maintenance. For the sake of avoiding foolish and costly mistakes this needs to stop.
- 7) Communication... Communication was terrible for the entire time I was at the facility. Veolia would say one thing and it often wasn't accurate, especially about what was a capitol project and what wasn't. As an operator I often was only able to find out information about what's going on in the plant for capital projects via MMSD's website. To start there should be a list of capital projects, their intended start/finish dates, projected costs, contractor that's working on them, and other relevant details posted in a control room of the building the work is being done in. If Veolia stops maintaining something on the list, MMSD should be able to be contacted easily and without fear of discipline.
- 8) The south shore treatment plant Shall be returned to and maintained in full operating condition. It is unacceptable that the plant has not been operated consistently at full designed capacity for over a decade, this must stop. There must be a time frame established quickly and accountability if it's not met. I get it, it's a complex problem, but guess what, there has been over 10+ years of data, sewer samples, and all sorts of things as a head start to help deal with this. Former operators that worked at the facility over 10 years ago may need to be contacted to figure out all of the nuances that changed in an effort to get it running better. If it takes hiring more maintenance workers, changing how the plant is run, or removal of the management team that's there, so be it. Enough with the excuses, fix it.
- 9) At some point in the near future an outside group needs to go through the facility with operators and make a list of everything that isn't working right, is broken, or at a reduced capacity in every building. Basically a giant work order list of what needs to be addressed to get the facilities back to fully functional. Due to the work order shenanigans over the years, many workers gave up on entering work orders for things that wouldn't get addressed. Many things that are broken simply don't have asset numbers that make it possible to put work orders in for them. MMSD spends hundreds of thousands of dollars a year to make their downtown riverfront property look great.

With MMSD is spending money on expensive things like “porous concrete” that requires contractors to pressure wash and vacuum truck clean often so it works, its unacceptable that concrete around buildings at JI has sunk 6+ inches because nobody has ever caulked a single concrete joint or fixed roof drains. For decades the facility has hid behind the capitol project system to hide the lack of maintenance. Having a complete list of everything that isn't maintained to the same standards as MMSDs office building would be a great start to see how bad the problem really is. I worked out of the MMSD office building for a summer when I was on the Skimmer boat for MMSD, and their facility was impeccably maintained in comparison to JI and south shore.

- 10)** Something must be done about the employee morale problem at the facilities and that's for both management and plant workers. I dont know how to fix it honestly. I have worked for both a municipal city run facility and a private industrial piping company since I left Veolia, and both of them had way better morale with employees. Possible ways to improve this is MMSD keeping non management workers informed on what they are doing, MMSD having a monthly or bi-monthly meeting with non management employees to talk about whats going on/take concerns. Forcing veolia to stop making a hostile work environment via threats/games. A recent development that happened since I came out and talked on the news is that Veolia released a memo that employees can't be in control rooms that they don't operate in for more than 10 minutes. I get it, you don't want workers turning work time into social hour, but a majority of workers don't do this. If it was a problem, deal with the people who are the problem. Don't lash out at the collective group of people with petty rules because you can. Believe it or not the workforce on site are the only people with the knowledge to operate the facility. If management treated the workers bad enough they could all call in crippling the plant. I don't believe it will ever happen, but it could happen, and the game Veolia is playing with being petty about things is a very slippery slope.
- 11)** Something should be done to hold more inventory of important parts. Things break often enough that constantly ordering things is a waste of time and money. I get it, veolia is free to inventory whatever they want, but at some point they should be forced to keep a minimum inventory. Numerous times I was told “parts are on order” only to find out a boss never ordered a part for months, all while operators are spending hours a day screwing around with equipment just to keep it working. Veolia has operated the facility for 18 years, there is no reason why they wouldn't have a list of commonly ordered parts for equipment that they could actually stock internally all the time. I am not talking about bottles of window cleaner but actual hard parts like motors, gearboxes, pumps, screw conveyors, etc.
- 12)** A plant wide 3rd party environmental health testing needs to be done. When I was employed at Jones island people were complaining about the air quality of the control rooms, in the buildings, etc. Veolia at one point or another did some sort of air quality monitoring in the milorganite facilities, and then refused to release the findings. Literally the Union president at the time couldn't get the test results, veolia refused. There has

been talk about mold issues and other unknown health hazards. The truth of what people are breathing on a daily basis needs to be known and presented to the people affected, without MMSDVeolia getting the info first.

- 13)** The control rooms need to all be updated to modern code with proper air quality. Its unacceptable that Veolia management has clean air and well heated/air conditioned offices (or MMSD for that matter) when operators and maintenance have to deal with outdated, filthy, H2S/dust contaminated control rooms. Working 12+ hours a day and not having a clean sink to wash a coffee pot that isn't for washing filthy hands/tools isn't right.
- 14)** Realistic budgets must be set for departmental bosses. I have been told countless times that a boss "would like to do something" but they can't because "corporate won't allow it". There is so much effort put into not spending money that it's not right that a boss (of say the machinists) has to justify what they spend money on. You give a boss a budget and let them do what they want with it. If they don't do a good job with that money then you get a boss that's more competent. Emergency money must exist for finding a way to fix things in an emergency. If a pump shaft is worn out so badly the packing can't be tightened to stop a major leak, pay the onsite machinists (overtime on a sunday if needed) to pull the pump apart, spray weld material on it, and then machine it back down so it leaks less. This is a common repair I personally do and to my knowledge hasnt been done once at the facility in 10+ years. Whats better, this repair, or letting equipment sit for 6 months or a year broken? The Maintenance facility at JI has lathes, milling machines, and welding machines that are basically mothballed. They sit around collecting dust because the machinists change parts, not actually machine anything.
- 15)** A study needs to be looked at when it comes to all the contracted work. Tax payer money is used to hire contractors to do all of the "upgrades" on the facilities. I get it, the facilities don't have enough staffing to do all the work that needs to be done. For example only 3 steam fitters do all of the work for all of Jones island, which is absolutely preposterous. However paying contractors to work down there for years if not decades can't be cheaper than just hiring 20 more plant workers to do the work and maintain it. A significant number of even simple projects such as replacing a few small pumps will be contracted out. To me its simple math, an onsite machinist is probably around 80-100\$ an hour for cost (wage+benefits). A contractor that brings a machinist in is going to charge 160-200\$ an hour for the same person. There is no way paying a contractor way more money per man hour is cheaper or ends in a better result for the money invested than just retaining staff onsite to do the work in house. I am not saying all contractor work is shoddy, many of the contractors did excellent work and had exceptional employees. I am saying there is no feasible way that it's cheaper to hire contractors to do the work vs having the staff to do it in house. If the guys that ultimately maintain all of the equipment are the ones that install it, a lot fewer errors will likely happen.

## **Final thoughts**

This document thus far has a lot of negatives and the truth is not everything was bad. I am going to share my final thoughts, some of which might actually be disagreed by many current/former employees. I am also going to talk about some hot button topics that I feel people don't understand. First and foremost the way the sewer system functions there is only so much that can be done to stop basement backups and flooding. Many people are unhappy with the fact combined sewer overflows/CSOs/diversions happen at all, and flooding exists, but beyond a certain point it's going to happen. Many of the combined sewers are located unbelievably deep in the ground in extremely difficult to get to areas of the city. Attempting to excavate them to split the lines is almost an impossible task. I witnessed how complex and "interestingly" engineered the city's sewer system is first hand when I literally crawled in sewers when I worked field maintenance. There are literally brick and wood sewers that still exist in the city that are fully functional. When looking at what's realistically possible with the given infrastructure, more credit needs to be given from the public for the challenges faced with treating storms. This doesn't take away from the fact that what I have seen points towards complete mismanagement of both JI and SS facilities, but some frame of reference of what's "actually capable of being done" with storm water must be understood.

I believe that veolia did a decent job at training people with general industrial training. Osha 10, crane safety/certs, CPR, confined space entry, and many other things were given to most employees. They tended to be overzealous on safety at times, aka Strict. Being strict on safety isn't a bad thing in my opinion though. I have worked for far less safe companies. I also believe that Veolia corporate was likely not fully aware of how bad the facilities were/are. If they make statements to the effect "we were unaware" I actually believe them. The amount of "book cooking" that went on at the facilities and the fact that Veolia corporate didn't exactly tour the facility often (or really have an idea of what was going on) doesn't mean they actually wanted to run the facilities the way they were. This is the danger in looking at simple things like if they met DNR permit or not as the complete indicator that everything is fine. Its entirely possible that they will be shocked by this document and believe it's not true, but I was there, I know what I saw, and they weren't there. If anything this document can serve as a catalyst to do better and improve things at the least.

I wrote a lot of negative (but honest/truthful) statements about Veolia management as a collective group. Not all members of management contributed towards the major issues at the facility. There were some of the best people I have ever met working in management at the facilities. People who cared, worked hard, actively tried to make a difference, and were skilled at what they did. Numerous bosses/management (some are still there) made drastic changes

for the better. Unfortunately many of these good people either left for other waste water plants, or became disenfranchised from getting nowhere. As hard as it was for me to deal with the weight of everything going on I truly believe many managers were even more stressed. During the permit violation 8 years ago many people in management were disciplined and some even fired/demoted (in some cases wrongfully) which made it difficult for many bosses to want to do anything for fear of being fired. Many managers were never listened to by MMSD at all, just like plant workers. Shift supervisors in particular were treated poorly in my opinion, which would explain why the turnover rate was so high for that position and the fact that for the first time in history no internal candidates put an application in for that job (more than once actually).

The workforce on site in general is unbelievably talented (and specialized) in what they do. To date I have never met as many hard working people who care and want to make a difference. The skills possessed by the machinists, steamfitters, operators, maintenance departments, and all other plant workers is universally excellent. The conditions faced dealing with raw sewage, fertilizer dust, confined spaces, city traffic, etc, are not good for health or well being. I have been literally waist deep in human waste trying to fix equipment with workers at that facility. Yes at the end of the day its a paycheck, but at the same time many of my former co-workers did a great service for the people of the district. I truly believe that the talent exists on site to take care of the facilities they way they should be. The raw manpower doesn't exist to take care of everything but the talent does exist.

Moving forward it's my hope that an investigation happens that looks at what is going on with MMSD and Veolia. The facilities have been privatized for so long without a legitimate "health check" from an independent source that it's time to do so. Being 100% truthful I don't know that getting rid of privatization is a solution that would be better. MMSD's leadership does not possess the knowledge to operate the facility, and it doesn't seem to me like they want the responsibility. They could take it over (and would likely) be less effective than Veolia's management staff. If the competing company Jacobs (which I have never heard of prior to hearing they were bidding on the contract and I know literally nothing about them) wins the contract there is an extreme risk of repeating many serious mistakes Veolia made. I believe privatization could work, but in all honesty I don't believe it is cost effective to do so, and the risk to equipment is too great. There is a reason MMSD never privatized the drinking water end, they likely knew the risk vs reward ratio didn't make sense.

Truth be told everything I have stated thus far would likely put a normal company out of business. If a private company ran things like I have described what I saw in this document, so be it. Where I believe it crosses the line is Tax payers money is being abused in this situation and public owned assets/facilities are being ruined. Tax payers deserve better than what's going on and they deserve accountability.

#### **Rebuttal of denial from Veolia MMSD:**

I want to take a minute and rebut what I believe both MMSD and Veolia might say to counter this document.

- 13) 1) I am not an angry former employee that was a problem. Right before I quit (of my own free will), I was offered a paid apprenticeship to become a machinist. Many people put in for this and I was one of 3 people that actually got it. Literally I had to apply and pass multiple tests along with getting the "ok" from multiple bosses. They would have never done this if I was a bad employee. I virtually was never late in the 14 years I was an employee, and upon leaving I turned in a huge amount of sick time I wasn't paid for. I finished out my two weeks without calling in. I wasn't even given an exit interview so most of the management had no idea why I left. I told the machinists boss when I notified him I was leaving that "the writings on the wall with the place" aka I felt it was past the point of no return.
- 14) I am not political at all and my motivations are not politically based. I have not voted in any election for any office (from local to president of the US) ever, this can be verified in the Wisconsin voting database. I am not a member of common ground or any other political organization. I don't know anyone from common ground beyond meeting with a few people one time to discuss what I know, and a couple short phone/email communications.
- 15) I came forward with this document and all the info on my own free will. I was not bribed, offered money, told to lie, or otherwise coerced to share info. The extent of my giving a public speech on what I saw consisted of Bob C from common ground asking me if I would go public and speak. It took me a day to consider but I was willing because what I know I feel would help generate an audit of the facilities and hopefully the truth of what's going on will come out.
- 16) I am not a current/former/or future employee of the Jacobs company that is trying to get the contract to run The MMSD plants. I have never heard of them prior to hearing they are bidding on the project, and have had no contact with them.
- 17) The timing of my coming forward has nothing to do with the fact a contract is out for bid and everything to do with the fact a previous whistleblower came forward with info. If the "damn was busted open" 2 years ago instead of recently, I would have come out then and not now with info. Likewise I didnt come forward sooner because I believe that nobody would have listened to me. MMSD didnt care about what plant workers thought.
- 18) I have no real opinion on this whole Veolia/Jacobs/MMSD issue of who should run the plant. MMSD doesn't know how to operate the facility, and will likely cause major problems if they take it over. Veolia has the most experience but failed to maintain the facility properly, and that will likely continue. Jacobs likely has no idea what they are getting into and will make major mistakes just like veolia did. Ultimately there are serious drawbacks to everything and no clear winner.

- 19) I have no desire for attention or fame. I actively do everything in my power to avoid it at all costs. Standing up and speaking for the media was one of the hardest things I have ever done in my life. I hope I don't have to ever again, but I will if needed.
- 20) My main motivation in writing this document is to somehow right the ship of wrong that exists with MMSD and Veolia. As a tax payer I don't like how they are wasting money and destroying assets. I believe that MMSD is every bit as guilty of waste as Veolia. Something needs to be done and some form of accountability must be formed. I don't want to see current and future employees going through what I had to endure. In all honesty the main fuel that has propelled me to write this 35+ page document was thinking back to when Veolia blew permit in 2018 and I didn't come forward sooner because I believe that nobody would have listened to me. MMSD didn't care about what plant workers thought.
- 21) A public apology for what they did would be a good start.
- 22) Ultimately I don't believe in conspiracy stories. I do believe in ignorance and lack of qualifications. I believe both MMSD and Veolia management have been extremely ignorant and unqualified to handle what they have been put in charge of. I believe that millions of tax dollars have been wasted and millions of dollars in equipment has been wrecked. I do believe (for reasons previously mentioned) that Both Veolia and MMSD have been disingenuous in how they care about lake Michigan/rivers/ the sewer system. Their decades of "shennagians" towards plant equipment has lead pollution of the lake that shouldn't have happened. I believe that a full scale investigation will lead to more significant discovered problems and more confirmations of what I have talked about.
- 23) MMSD & Veolia will likely blame the fact work orders didn't exist for a significant amount of why the plants are in disrepair. This is unacceptable and what I call the "lazy operator" excuse. MMSD/city tax payers own all of the equipment at the facilities, and if the operators are so lazy they just don't put work orders in to get things fixed, then they should have been held accountable. MMSD and Veolia knew exactly what condition the plants are in, and if they claim they didn't then they are either lying or its proof that they never actually went out in the plants. MMSD is number one for being accountable for every day that facility was allowed to be in disrepair and they did not hold Veolia accountable.
- 24) Lastly, Veolia has already taken the attitude of "most of what I said is old news", but I believe this is not accurate. The public has not known about most of what I said, and regardless of when things happened, they still happened, and they are still wrong. I hope that MMSD looks at this document thoroughly and realises that maybe they have failed in many aspects and that they need to improve. I am not out to get people fired, cause problems, or make enemies. I just can't stand for something I feel is unethical, wrong, and wasteful.

-Greg Gyskiewicz