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Questions are being asked about performance of small communities and alternative wastewater technologies. These questions started from rumors from a Rural Development (RD) conference in July 2005. RD presented statistics (such as 76% failure rate of their funded systems) and named engineering companies.

North American Wetland Engineering (NAWE) has reviewed both RD and MPCA project files and has found NO evidence to support the categorization of any NAWE systems as failing or being classified as intermittent failures.

Based on many meetings NAWE has had with Rural Development, The Public Facilities Authority and The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, this is our understanding of the current state of small community publicly funded wastewater systems.

- Rural Development (RD) started to become aware of alternative system problems in 2003/2004.
- In July 2005, RD held a conference to discuss alternative systems and their problems; 21 alternative wastewater systems were discussed at this conference.
- Of the 21 systems discussed, 6 of these were classified as failed systems. **None of these classified as ‘failed systems’ were designed by NAWE.**
- The 2005 bonding bill contained \$5 million to address problems at these 6 ‘failed’ systems.
- RD identified another 7 of the 21 as ‘intermittent failures’ **RD has since changed their terminology from ‘intermittent failure’ to ‘intermittent problem’.**
- **RD acknowledges that operation and maintenance (O&M) issues appear to be a large component of systems with ‘intermittent problems’**
- **RD indicated it has never been their intention to categorize systems with ‘intermittent problems’ as primarily design problems.**
- The 2006 bonding bill contains \$6.5 million to address 9 systems with ‘intermittent problems’.
 - NAWE has 4 systems on the bonding bill; Spring Hill, Darfur, Tamarack & Palisade.
 - All of these communities (with the exception of Palisade) are in compliance and operating within permit limits.
 - Tamarack was placed back in compliance and remains in compliance after the community changed operators in February, 2006. The previous operator had neglected the system and there are now repairs needed. The previous operator of Tamarack currently operates Palisade.
 - NAWE is working with Tamarack and Darfur to help them prepare repair and update plans for their systems due to aging and new technology that is now available.