



Overboard Discharge Systems (OBDs)

ShAC meeting 5/8/24

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MAINE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Protecting Maine's Air, Land and Water

What is an OBD?

DEP's definition of an overboard discharge:

An overboard discharge (OBD) is a discharge to surface waters of the State of domestic pollutants (sanitary wastes or wastewater from household activities generated at residential or commercial locations) that are not conveyed to municipal or quasi-municipal sewerage treatment facilities.

Why do we have OBDs?

Prior to CWA and state water quality law, some people had straight pipes. No treatment!

In 1970s OBDs replaced straight pipes where there was no municipal sewer system or potential for a subsurface septic system.

OBDs were the solution to a larger problem of untreated wastewater.



How many OBDs are there?

1970s: - approximately 3,000.

Now: - approximately 700.

New OBDs are not allowed.

Expansion of OBDs is not allowed.

Most OBDs are residential. Some are commercial.



How are OBDs regulated?

Must be licensed by DEP.

Pay annual fee.

Inspected by DEP.

OBDs must be removed, if there is an alternative, as required by law.



Do OBDs Provide Treatment?

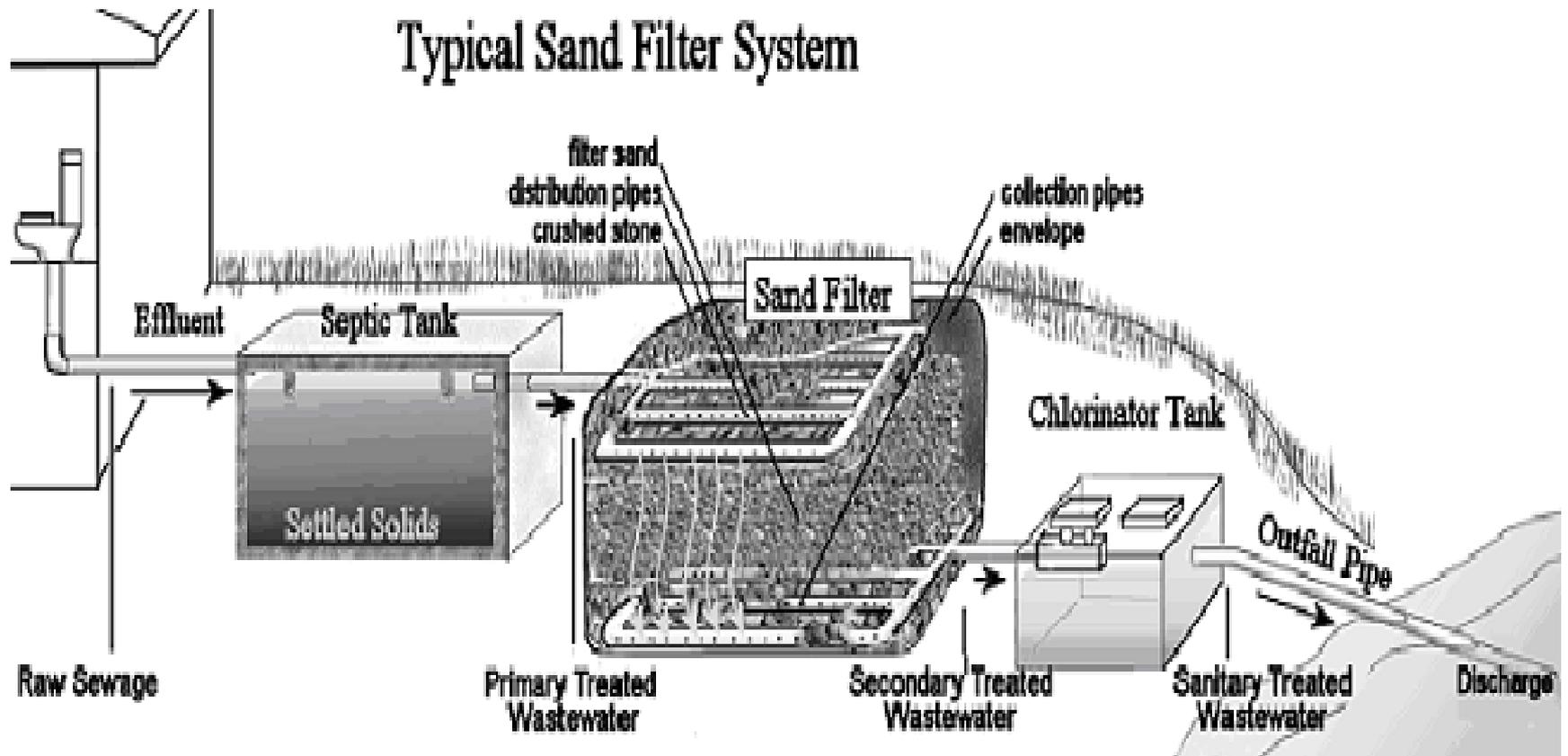
Yes!

Sand filter OBD systems and mechanical OBD systems treat wastewater to a “secondary treatment” level, the same level of treatment that municipal systems must achieve.

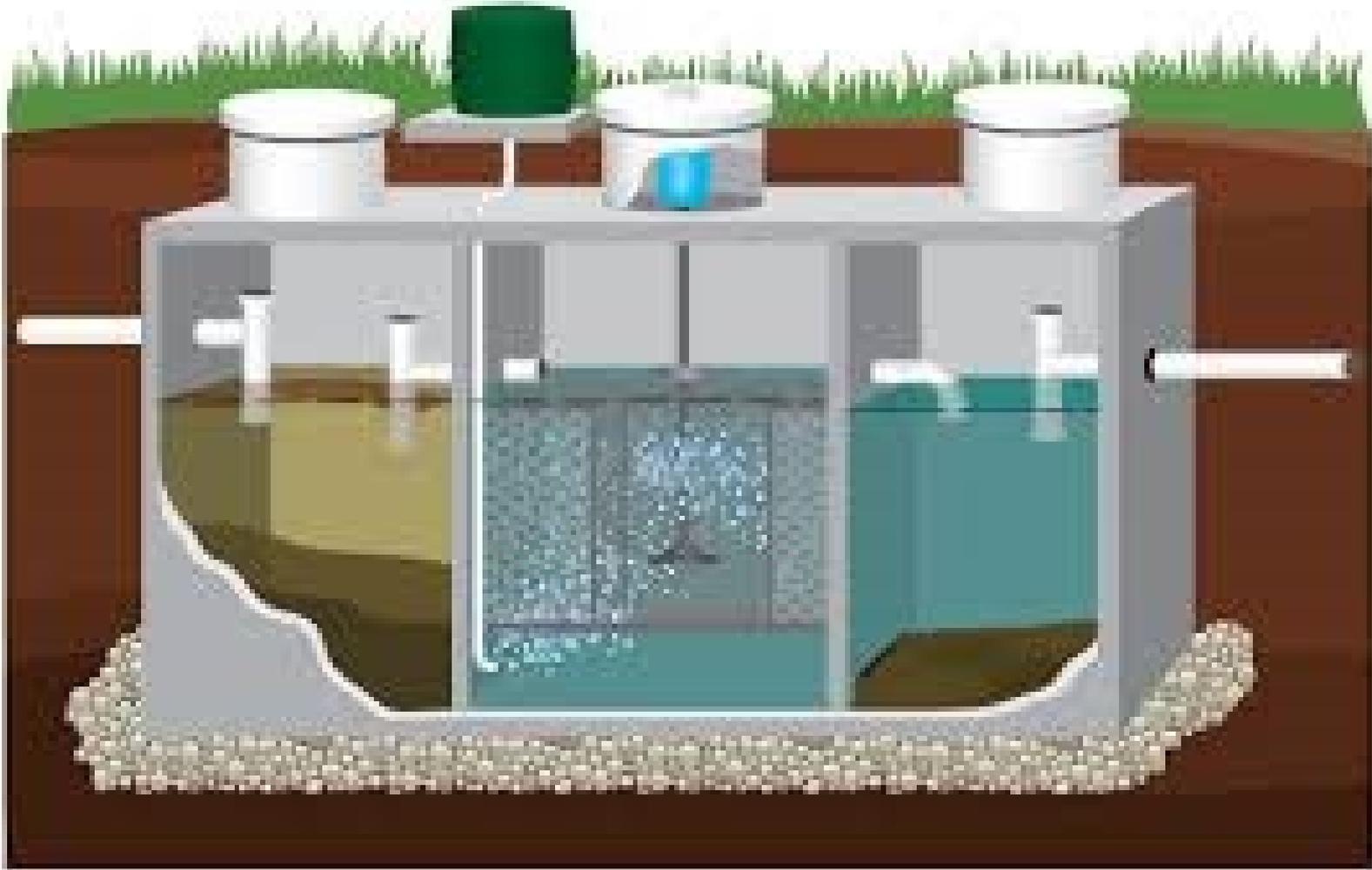
OBDs provide chlorine disinfection.



Sand Filter Systems



Generalized Mechanical Treatment Operation



Cromaglass C500



Typical Discharge Pipes



Inspecting a Nayadic System



OBD Inspections: The End Result

Good Quality Effluent: This what we want!



Statutory Triggers for OBD Removals

- As a precaution, the presence of an outfall pipe (OBD or POTW) requires closure of shellfish area regardless of quality of effluent.
- To facilitate opening of these closed areas, Maine law, via several triggers, requires removal of OBDs, if there is an alternative.



When are OBDs Required to be Removed?

- Connection to municipal sewer is feasible. Costs for connection are borne by the owner.
- Upon transfer of a property, if a site evaluation by a Licensed Site Evaluator demonstrates a subsurface system can be installed. Costs for new system are borne by the owner or buyer.
- Upon “Significant Action” (a single construction project costing \$50K). If a site evaluation by a Licensed Site Evaluator demonstrates a subsurface system can be installed. Costs for the new system are borne by the owner.



OBD Removal Required (cont.)

- Upon relicensing (every 5 years).
- Every five years an OBD must be evaluated by an LSE to determine if a viable alternative is available.
- Waivers from plumbing code are often needed. (LPI & DHHS).
- However.....



OBD Removal Required (cont.)

...the owner or owners may keep the OBD if:

- The property is the primary residence of the owner(s).
- The combined income of the owner or all owners of the property is <\$125 K, and the Department has not offered a grant for removal.



OBD Removal Grants

- The DEP may offer a grant to remove an OBD.
 - The DEP prioritizes OBDs for removal grant money. Work in partnership with DMR.
 - The DEP will only offer a grant if there is an identified alternative to the OBD.
 - Grant funding 100% to 25%.
 - Grant money is available only to licensees who have a primary residence served by an OBD.



OBD Removal Grants (cont).

- Grant funding is via state bonds approved by Legislature and voters.
- Last bond was 2018 for \$350,000.
- Targeted removals that will open shellfish areas are now very limited.



OBD Removal Grants (cont).

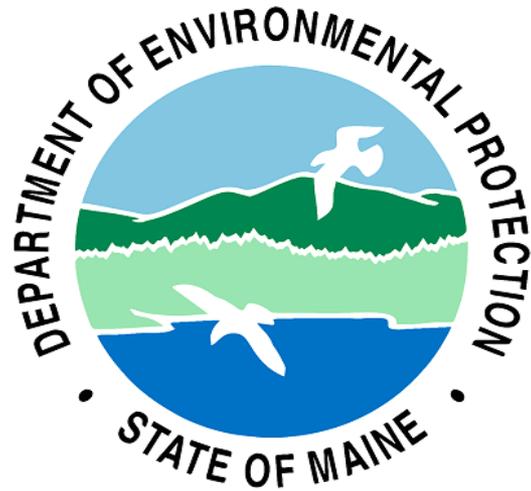
- Targeted OBD removals that will open shellfish areas are now very limited.
- Most OBDs that may have a feasible alternative have already been removed.
- Closure areas often have several OBDs in the area. To open the area all OBDs have to be removed. It is unlikely all OBDs in an area will have an alternative.
- Funding is not the limiting factor for removals.



Moving Forward

- DEP will continue to pursue OBD removals where feasible in partnership with DMR.
- DEP is considering potential changes to OBD laws to facilitate more OBD removals.
- DEP is considering a potential request for some additional funds for OBD grant removal program.





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