



Why do I pay the BPW a Storm Water Charge if I do not have catch basin in front of my home? The BPW charges its customers a Storm Water charge to maintain the storm water infrastructure and manage its effects for the greater good of the community.

ISSUE: Storm Water Charges. The BPW has determined that funds are required to maintain the storm water system and plan for future improvements.

BACKGROUND: Customers have asked: Why do I pay the BPW a Storm Water Charge if I do not have a catch basin in front of my home?

The storm water utility charge is not about “you” it is about “all of us”.

The storm water utility should be viewed differently from the other utility services you receive as customers of the Lewes Board of Public Works (BPW). The electricity, water and wastewater utility services and their attendant charges to you as a customer are all about you and what you consume or create. How much electricity or water you use and how much wastewater you generate are the basis for the per-unit charges and the “ready to serve” charge that maintains those systems so that the infrastructure is available to you and supports your needs.

The storm water fee is charged to every customer of the BPW to pay for the storm water system that protects us all during precipitation events. Storm water that does not soak into the ground becomes surface runoff and flows into the storm water system. The storm water fee is not charged to pay for a catch basin in front of your home or business. The monies collected under this BPW charge are used to cover the overall costs of the infrastructure of the storm water system. More importantly, the storm water system keeps the essential roadways clear so all may be able to travel on these roads during precipitation events.

At this time, the Lewes storm water is discharged, untreated, into the Lewes canal. It is anticipated that future Federal regulations implemented under the Federal Clean Water Act, as the legal framework for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit Program, will require Lewes and other utilities supporting municipalities to change the way they address discharge of water containing pollutants into waters of the United States. These future “unfunded mandates” will cost more to all BPW customers. The complexity of addressing those changes will not be optional and will not be cheap.

STATUS: The BPW continues to work with the City of Lewes, University of Delaware and other appropriate State and Federal agencies to improve storm water practices and policies in the areas served by the BPW. The \$5 storm water fee covers maintenance to keep the storm water drainage pipes open throughout the service area and ensures that major road arteries are kept open in times of rain events and essential repairs for the “greater good of the community”. This fee only meets current operational and maintenance needs for the backbone system.

QUESTIONS: If you have further questions about the basis for the storm water charge, please contact the BPW General Manager, Darrin Gordon: 302-645-6228 or go to customerservice@lewesbpw.com

June 2, 2017