

# **New Orleans Coalition on Sewerage and Water Board**

1024 Elysian Fields Ave., New Orleans, LA 70117 - (504) 943-0044 x102

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April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2003

Mr. Harold Gorman  
Director, New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board  
625 St. Joseph Street  
New Orleans, LA 70112

Dear Mr. Gorman,

On behalf of the more than 90 member organizations in the New Orleans Coalition on the Sewerage and Water Board, we write to express our concerns regarding the short comment period established by the Board to receive public comment on the Request for Proposals (RFP), issued today, for the operations and maintenance of the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board.

The document released today is 667 pages long, yet the public has only been given thirty days to comment on its content. Thirty days is clearly not enough time to adequately review and comment on a document that contains the details of a 20-year, \$1 billion contract for managing New Orleans's most essential resource. Considering that this new RFP dramatically expands the scope of privatization by including capital improvements of water infrastructure in the bid, a comment period at least equal in length to the four-month comment period provided for the previous RFP would seem to be the minimum period for such a significant initiative.

Moreover, the draft RFP appears to contemplate little time, if any, for the Sewerage and Water Board to review public comments on the draft RFP. The short time allotted for receipt and review of public comments gives the appearance of a process without substance.

We hereby urge you to extend the public comment period to at least 120 days and look forward to your quick action to ensure quality review and public participation with regard to this important decision.

Sincerely,

Wade Rathke, Chief Organizer, Service Employees International Union Local 100  
Wenonah Hauter, Director, Critical Mass Energy and Environment Program, Public Citizen

cc: Mayor C. Ray Nagin