

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
DES MOINES, IOWA**

**CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION 96-253
JUNE 17, 1996 AGENDA**

SUBJECT:	TYPE:	SUBMITTED BY:
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY APPLICATION TO STUDY MERCURY TOXICITY	◆ RESOLUTION ORDINANCE RECEIVE/FILE	HAROLD SMITH ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

SYNOPSIS —

A mercury toxicity study of the Des Moines River watershed is necessary to provide pertinent data for the City's NPDES permit with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). A USEPA grant is available to assist in funding the study. Grants made by the USEPA to a municipality require that all documents be signed by an authorized representative of the governing body and that proof of such authorization be submitted with the Application for Federal Assistance.

FISCAL IMPACT —

The cost of this project is anticipated to be \$100,000, of which \$95,000 will be funded with the USEPA Grant and \$5,000 will be funded locally as part of the 1995/96 Capital Improvements Program on page 227 entitled *ICA Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant—General Replacement and Facility Modification*, account number 39267.

RECOMMENDATION —

Approval to authorize Eric A. Anderson, City Manager, to execute and file an application on behalf of the City for a grant in the amount of \$95,000 from the USEPA.

BACKGROUND —

The IDNR has issued an NPDES permit to the Des Moines WRA wastewater treatment facility which has been appealed. The permit is necessary for operation of the facility to comply with requirements of the Federal Clean Water Act. The IDNR has proposed a revised NPDES permit with restrictive standards for mercury concentration in the effluent discharged into the Des Moines River from the WRA wastewater treatment plant. Since historical data has indicated the presence of mercury in measurable quantities, the permit further requires the City to perform a site specific water quality toxicity study to determine (a) if the levels of mercury are valid or of concern, (b) if a modified water quality standard and hence permit limit would be appropriate to locate potential sources of mercury in the collection system, and (c) to devise means to control these sources.

The USEPA has advised that Federal grant funds are available to communities for the purpose of performing water quality studies of the nation's watersheds. The study required to determine mercury toxicity in the Des Moines River has been determined to qualify for such grant funds and the USEPA has advised that a 95 percent grant in the amount of \$95,000 has been designated for the project. Regardless as to whether or not the City chooses to submit an application for grant funds, the study must be completed to satisfy the requirements of the NPDES permit.