

**Mountaintop Area Joint Sanitary Authority**  
**Press Release**  
**April 26, 2024**

Mountaintop Area Joint Sanitary Authority (MAJSA) is overhauling its entire sewer system to meet the current standards of the Domestic Wastewater Facilities Manual published by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). To improve the system for the benefit of the residents of Glen Summit, MAJSA applied for grant funding. With the assistance of Senator John Yudichak, MAJSA secured \$300,000.00. These funds were used to offset some of the engineering and planning costs for the new system. MAJSA obtained a loan for the remaining funds of the new system. The project was placed out for bids and the contract was awarded at a cost of \$2,492,644.45. Work is expected to begin in May and end in August of this year. MAJSA is paying the costs to construct the new system. However, MAJSA cannot absorb all of the Glen Summit residents' costs because we would have to substantially increase rates to rate payers who do not reside in Glen Summit.

MAJSA sent letters to the residents of Glen Summit beginning in May of 2021, informing them that their sewer laterals may need to be replaced at their own cost. During that same year, MAJSA began negotiations with the Glen Summit Board for easements to replace the sewer mains in more easily accessible locations that are less disruptive to the residents than the current locations. The sewer mains needed to be replaced because of the failure of substandard materials that were already in place, which caused excessive stormwater and groundwater to infiltrate the treatment system thereby reducing the available sewer capacity and increasing treatment cost. In March of 2023, MAJSA entered into written agreements with Glen Summit to secure the easements and to require residents to replace their sewer laterals at their own costs, if their lateral needed to be replaced.

MAJSA offered to televise the residents' sewer laterals at no cost to the residents. Of the 60 residents, 43 of them took advantage of this free service. Unfortunately, most of the sewer laterals need to be replaced. The 2018 edition of the International Residential Code, as adopted by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, provides under Section 2603.6 that the sewer lateral depth shall be determined by the locale. The MAJSA Rules and Regulations from 2012 and as replaced in 2022 require the depth of sewer laterals to be 48 inches. The reason for the depth requirement is to prevent freezing and be consistent with the depth of the MAJSA sewer main. Most of the laterals in Glen Summit are only between 12 inches and 36 inches in depth. These depths are susceptible to freezing, which causes backups and failure. Section 702.2 of the International Plumbing Code, as adopted by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, requires sewer laterals to be of a certain material. The MAJSA Rules and Regulations from 2012 and as replaced in 2022 require the same types of materials. Unfortunately, most of the sewer laterals in Glen Summit are not made of any of the required materials. These materials are required to provide a fail-safe system. In addition, Part III, Section 25.2 of the Domestic Facilities Wastewater Facilities Manual published by DEP requires sewers to be deep enough to prevent freezing. In Northeastern Pennsylvania the requirement below freezing is at least 44 inches below ground surface.

To keep Glen Summit residents informed of the progress of the project, MAJSA set up scheduled meeting dates and times and made its professional engineer available to them at MAJSA's costs. However, only a handful of residents took advantage of these offers.

MAJSA has also waived permit connection fees for the replacement of the residents' sewer laterals. However, MAJSA cannot pay for the costs to replace the residents' private laterals and it would negatively impact the other rate payers.

**MAJSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**