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## Licking County Health Department

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### *Funds available to repair failing Household Sewage Treatment Systems*

*Licking County homeowners can apply for assistance this year*

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**08/21/14 LICKING COUNTY, OHIO** – Funds are available to assist low-income homeowners in the Licking County area in repairing or replacing failing Household Sewage Treatment Systems (HSTS) this year. The funds, or loan principal forgiveness subsidies, are made available through the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund Project – a project the Licking County Health Department is participating in during the 2014 year.

HSTS, including septic tanks with leach fields and discharging aerators, are used to process household sewage and other wastewater when homes are not connected to a central sewer system. When these systems are not operating properly, they can contribute nitrogen, phosphorous and pathogens to local rivers and streams.

“Being able to provide a low cost option for homeowners to replace their failing septic systems will not only benefit them, but it will also help to protect their friends and neighbors from the potential health concerns from illegally discharging sewage,” said Chad Brown, LCHD Environmental Health Director.

The Water Pollution Control Loan Fund Project is part of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance. Annually, depending on income and size of household, homeowners can receive 85 percent or 100 percent loan principal forgiveness for qualified repair or replacement. Details on income levels can be found at <http://bit.ly/1z23Nvp>.

This this is the first year LCHD has participated in the project. The Health Department has partnered with Franklin Soil and Water to administer the application process and determine eligibility of the applicants.

Watersheds stretch across both LCHD’s and Franklin Soil and Water’s jurisdictions. A significant area of the Blacklick Creek watershed is in both Licking and Franklin Counties, as is the Big Walnut watershed, to a lesser extent. Priority will be given to homeowners in the Blacklick Creek and Big Walnut watersheds, but the program is available to all Licking County homeowners who meet the income requirement and have a failing HSTS, as determined by the LCHD.

Failing HSTS are known to be a cause of impairment in rivers and streams in many areas across Ohio. Lack of maintenance, aging systems, deficient system design, and even turning off the electricity to discharging aerators can contribute to system failure. Ohio EPA has indicated as many as 350 discharging aerators in the Blacklick watershed in Licking County may not meet current Ohio EPA standards.

Homeowners interested in more information about the Licking County HSTS assistance program should contact Kurt Keljo, Franklin Soil and Water watershed coordinator, at (614) 486-9613, extension 121 or

[kkeljo@franklinswcd.org](mailto:kkeljo@franklinswcd.org) to begin the application process.

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*“The Licking County Health Department serves more than 160,000 citizens in the Licking County General Health District by preventing disease, protecting the environment and promoting healthy lifestyles with a vision of ‘healthy people living in healthy communities.’”*