



STATE OF THE SEWERS 2019

Performance Metrics
November 30, 2019

Fiscal Year 2019 (July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019)



Bill de Blasio
Mayor

Vincent Sapienza, P.E.
Commissioner

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INTRODUCTION

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) protects public health and the environment by supplying clean drinking water, collecting and treating wastewater, and reducing air, noise, and hazardous materials pollution. To achieve this mission, DEP operates and maintains 7,500 miles of sewers that convey an average of 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater per day to 14 in-city wastewater treatment plants.

Over the last decade, DEP has embraced a data-driven, proactive approach to operating and maintaining the sewer system. By using a range of digital tools and innovative practices, DEP develops targeted programs to provide a high level of service to our customers while focusing on investments that will prioritize our resources.



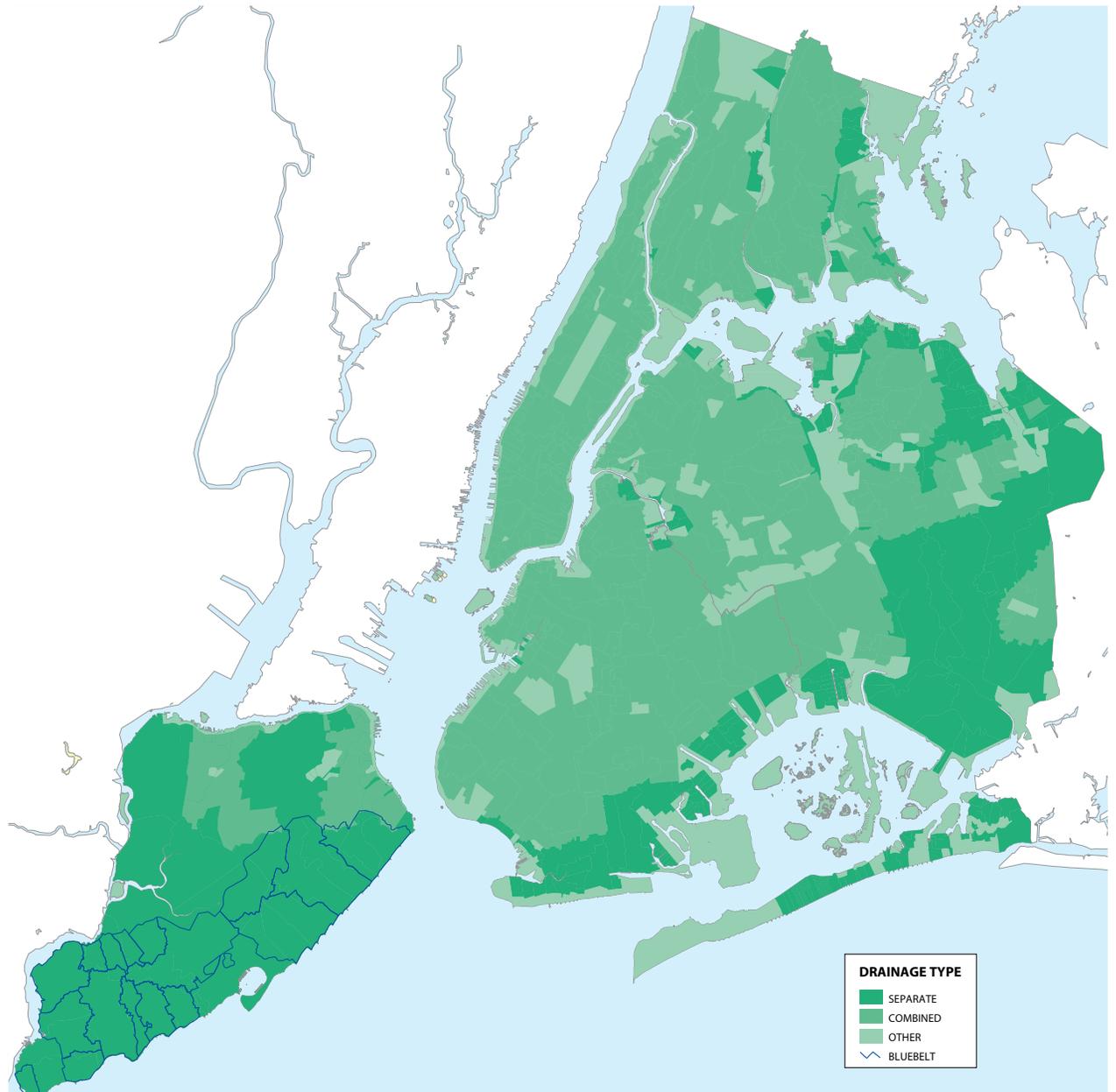
THE SEWER SYSTEM

Approximately 60% of New York City's sewer system is combined, handling sanitary waste from both homes and businesses as well as storm water. The other 40% of the sewer system is separated – sanitary sewers carry sewage to the treatment plant, while storm sewers carry storm water runoff in a separate pipe directly to a local waterway.

In wet weather, wastewater treatment plants that receive combined flow can treat up to twice the designed dry weather flow. However, to eliminate flooding from roadways, the capacity of the city's sewer system is greater than that of the plants. When the plants reach their capacity at twice dry weather flow, regulators release the excess flow from the sewers into the harbor as combined sewer overflow to protect against sewage backing up into homes and businesses.

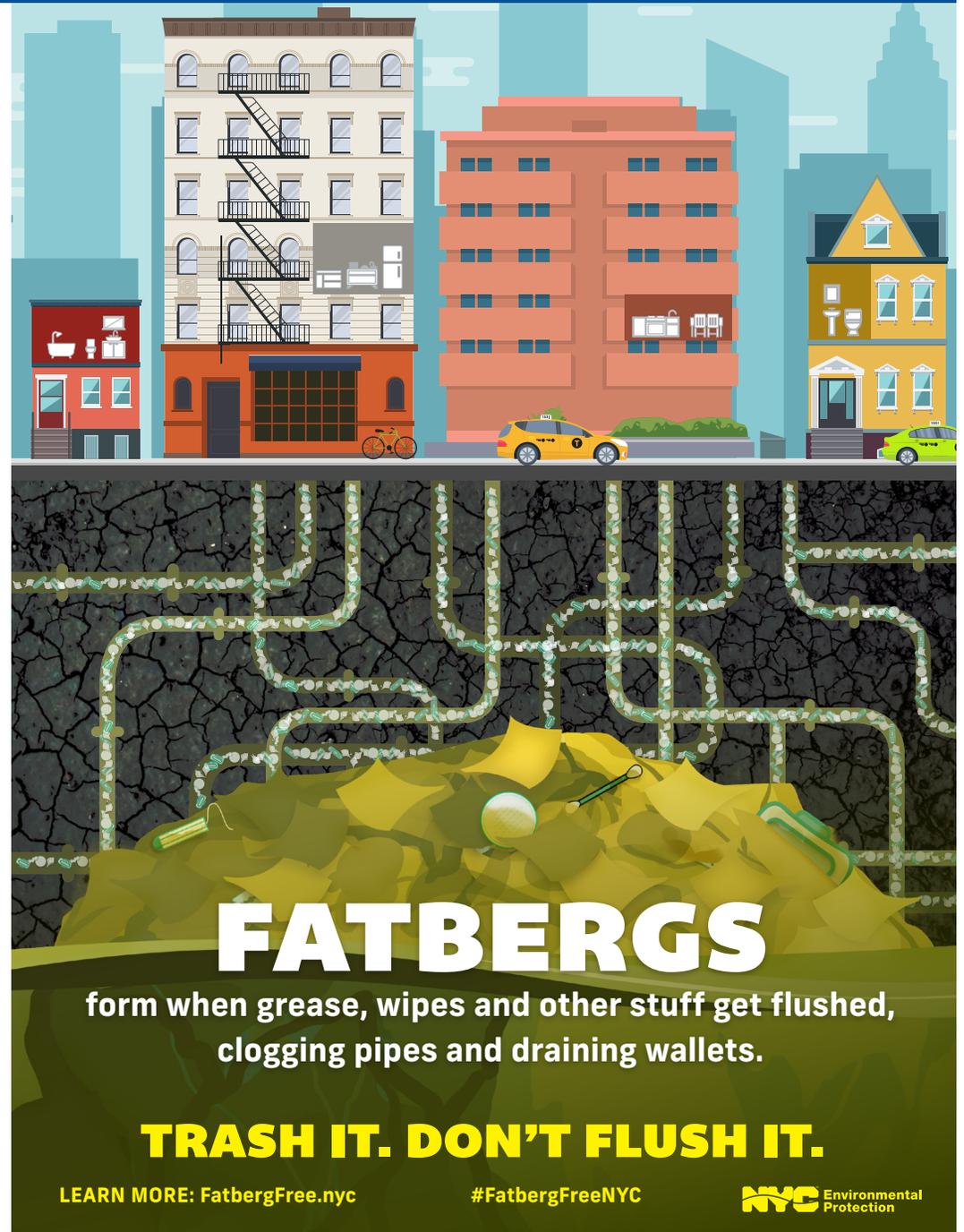
Sewers vary in size; however, all sewers are designed to convey wastewater through the system at a speed fast enough to minimize the deposition of debris and sediment in the pipes but slow enough to minimize scouring and erosion. DEP targets its programs and resources to ensure the system continues to operate as designed and to maintain the system in a state of good repair.

To learn more about how DEP's sewer system functions, [click here](#).



TRASH IT. DON'T FLUSH IT.

New York City needs the help of all its residents to keep our sewer system running properly, which is why DEP launched the "Trash It. Don't Flush It." campaign in 2019 to warn New Yorkers of the hazards of flushing grease, wipes, and other trash down the drain. The public behavior campaign included subway station dominations in strategic locations, bus shelter ads, bus cards, a television commercial, and targeted social media and web advertising. The campaign garnered more than 95 million impressions and more than 150,000 website visits. Door-to-door outreach efforts reached more than 30,000 people and DEP also conducted grease compliance inspections at dozens of food establishments. To learn more about this campaign and how to properly dispose of grease, wipes, and other trash, visit fatbergfree.nyc.



PERFORMANCE METRICS

DEP uses a variety of metrics to evaluate our operations across the agency, from frontline supervisors to senior management. This data-driven approach allows us to focus our resources, develop targeted programs, and provide the highest level of service to our customers. All annual performance metrics in this report correspond to fiscal years. For example, Fiscal Year 2019 began July 1, 2018 and ended June 30, 2019.

Sewer Backup Complaints

When our field crews respond to a customer call about a potential sewer backup, they first open manholes around the area where the backup or blockage is reported. If the sewer segment has higher than expected wastewater levels, the crew will note this as a “confirmed sewer backup” whether or not any backups occur. If a crew does not detect higher wastewater levels than expected, it is noted as an “unconfirmed sewer backup.”

Recurring Confirmed Backup Complaints

The sewer system is divided into 160,000 “sewer segments” that run between two adjacent manholes. In order to identify systemic issues, DEP tracks street segments with recurring confirmed sewer back-ups (multiple backups on the same segment in the same year) during both dry and wet weather.

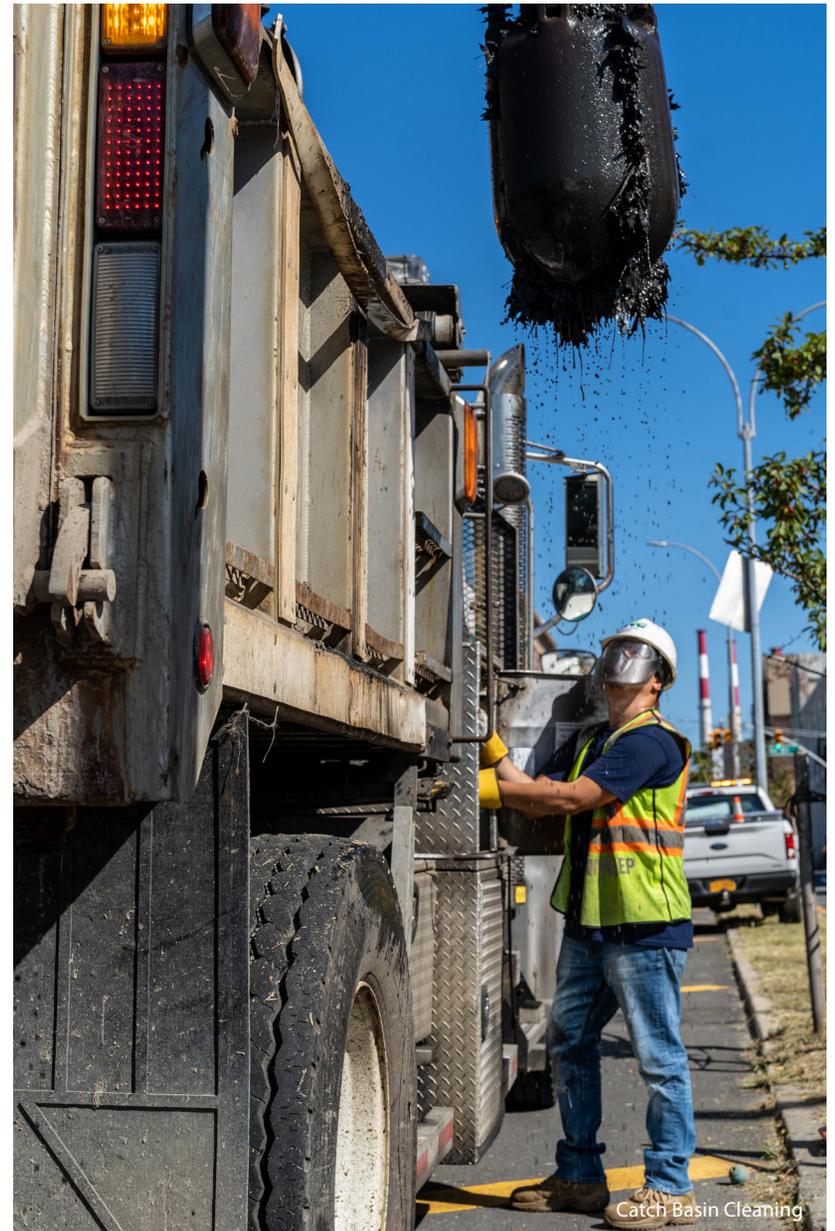
Sewer Cleaning

Proactive sewer cleaning includes miles of sewers cleaned as part of the inspection and analysis programs, regular sewer maintenance program, and the Department of Design and Construction inspection and cleaning. Sewer cleaning activities in response to a 311 complaint are categorized as “Reactive” cleaning

Confirmed Sewer Backup Causes

After visually inspecting affected sewer segments, crews identify and record the potential cause of a confirmed sewer backup.

- “Grease” refers to the buildup of fats, oils, and grease in a sewer.
- “Debris” refers to sand, silt, and roadbed aggregate that accumulate along the bottom of the sewer.
- “Heavy Rain” refers to microbursts and other brief, heavy rainstorms that can temporarily overtax the sewer.
- “Other” includes backups where conditions warranted further investigation.



Catch Basin Cleaning

CITYWIDE

DEP's extensive and robust sewer inspection, analysis and cleaning programs continue to net improvements across all key performance indicators citywide. While some variations can be seen in a year-to-year comparison of the data, the trend over the past five years demonstrates that DEP's programs have achieved meaningful improvements.

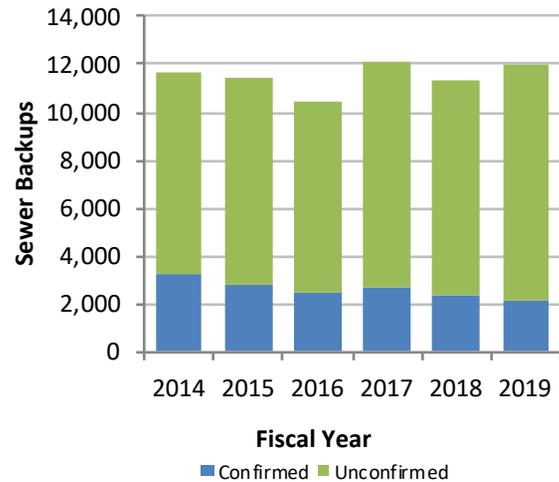
Between 2014 and 2018, DEP received an average of 11,394 total sewer backup complaints (both confirmed and unconfirmed), compared to an average of 11,461 total sewer backup complaints between 2015 and 2019, an increase of less than 1%. Notably, with respect to confirmed sewer backups, average annual complaints dropped 8% when the five-year average of 2014-2018 is compared to that of 2015-2019, a decrease from 2,722 complaints to 2,513.

Similar improvements can be seen in recurring confirmed sewer backups (both wet and dry weather), which have decreased by 11% over the same time-periods (averaging 503 annually for 2014-2018, compared to 448 for 2015-2019). Dry weather recurring sewer backups also netted a 5% decrease, dropping from an average of 314 in 2014-2018 to an average of 298 in 2015-2019.

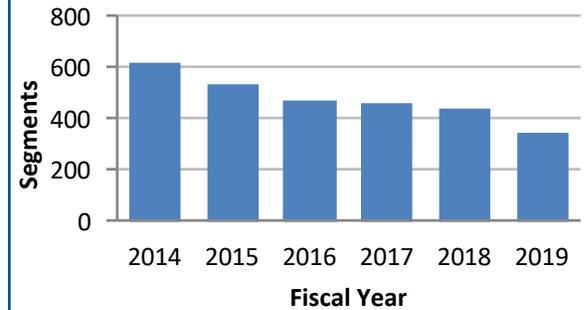
In FY2019, 66% of backups were grease-related; 17% attributed to debris; 10% attributed to heavy rains; and 7% due to other causes.

Systematic sewer cleaning continued on pace, with more proactive cleaning than reactive.

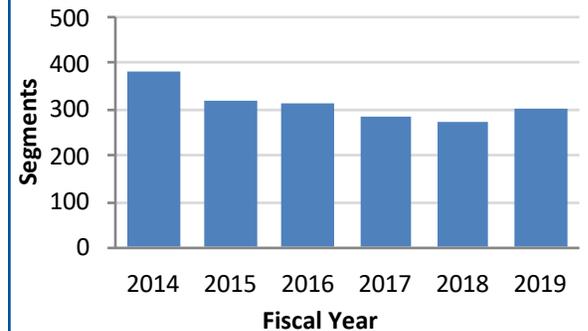
Sewer Backup Complaints



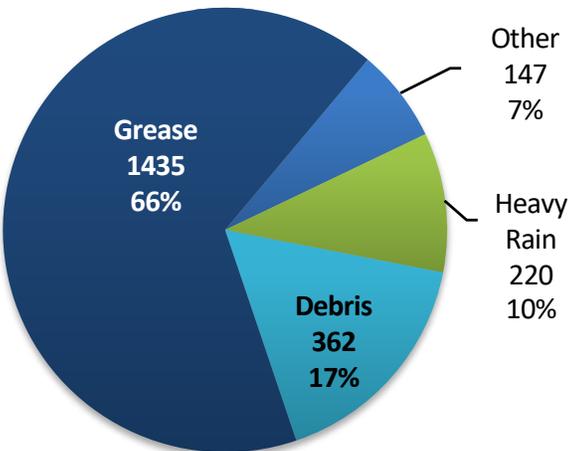
Recurring Confirmed Backup Segments



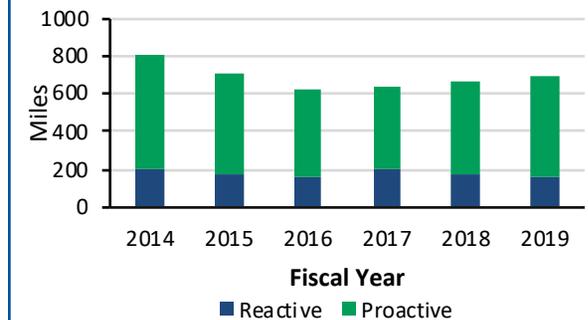
Recurring Confirmed Dry Weather Backup



FY19 Confirmed Sewer Backup Causes



Sewer Cleaning Miles



SEWER BACKUP AND CATCH BASIN RESOLUTION TIME

New York City has more than 148,000 catch basins to collect storm water runoff from streets and sidewalks. DEP’s rigorous sewer and catch basin inspection, analysis, and cleaning programs have produced improvements in the level of sewer service citywide.

Over the past six years, the time to resolve sewer-related issues has remained below our service level targets of 7 hours to resolve a sewer backup complaint and 9 days to resolve a catch basin complaint.

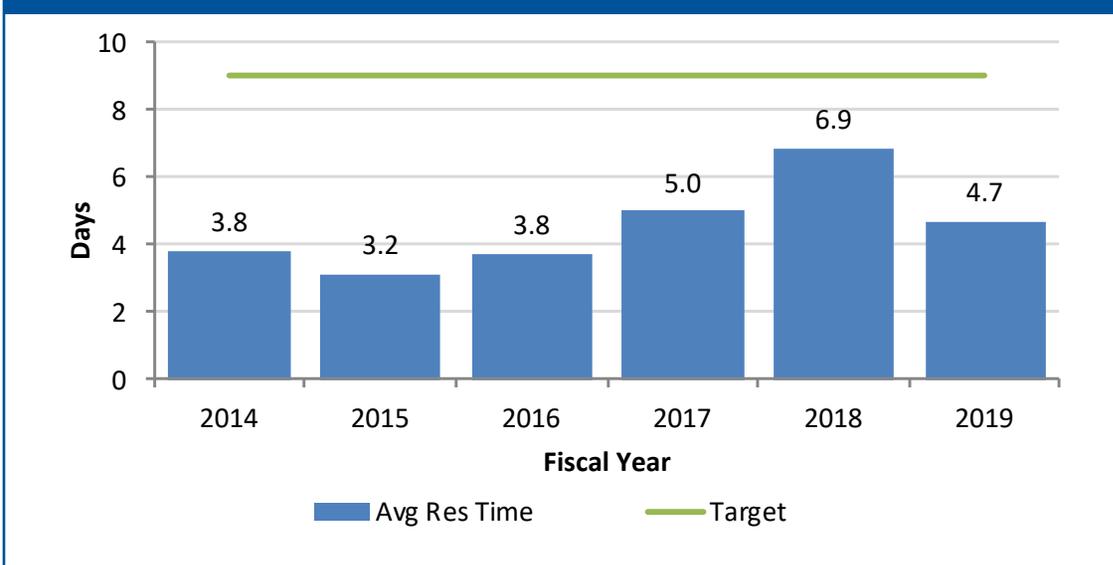
From 2014-2018, DEP resolved sewer backup complaints in 4.0 hours, on average. This time stayed the same between 2015 and 2019.

For catch basin-related complaints, the average resolution time from 2014 to 2018 was 4.5 days which increased slightly to 4.7 days for 2015 to 2019. The resolution time for catch basin complaints increased since 2016 but decreased in 2019. The increase is primarily attributable to Local Law 48 of 2015 that required DEP, starting in July 2016, to inspect all DEP catch basins on a yearly basis, rather than on the prior 3-year cycle, in which DEP inspected 1/3 of the DEP catch basins city-wide each year.

Sewer Backup Resolution Time

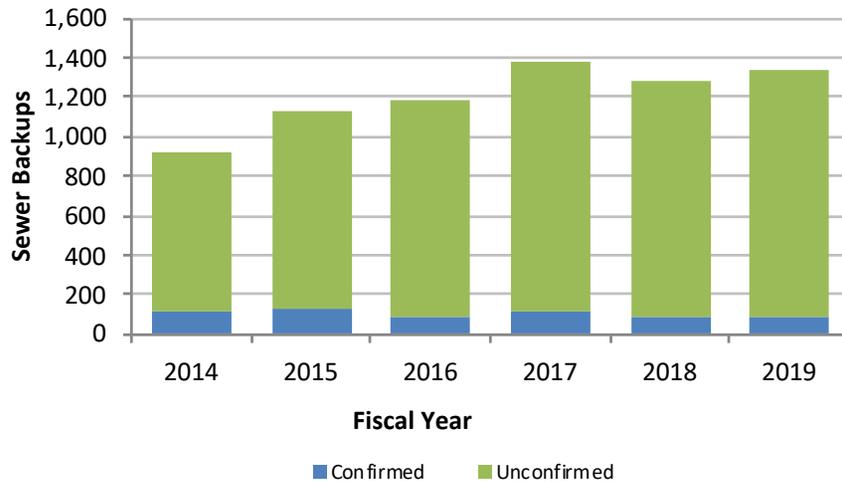


Catch Basin Complaint Resolution Time

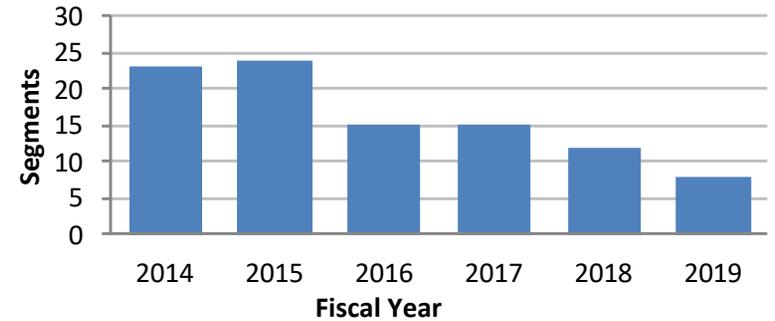


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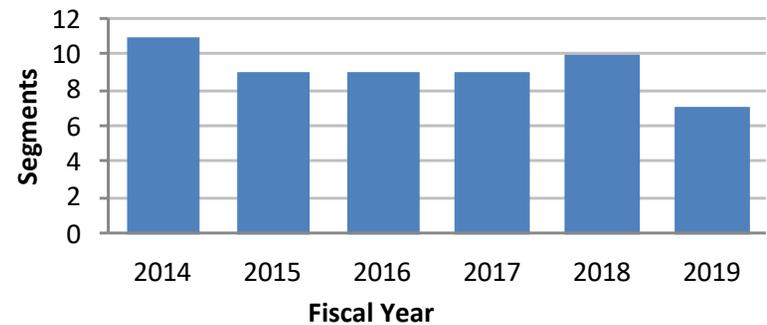
Sewer Backup Complaints



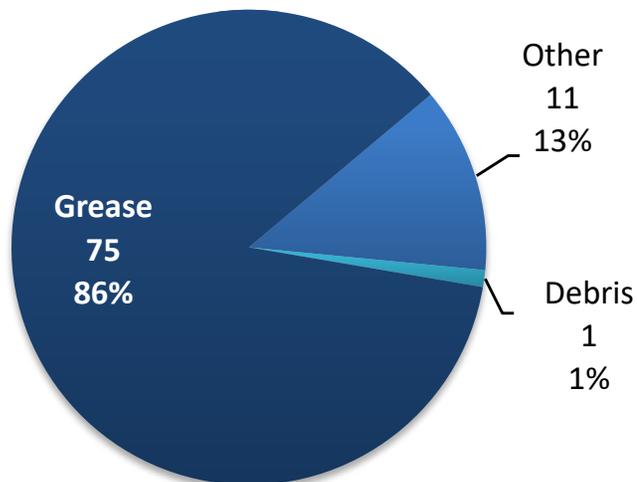
Recurring Confirmed Backup Segments



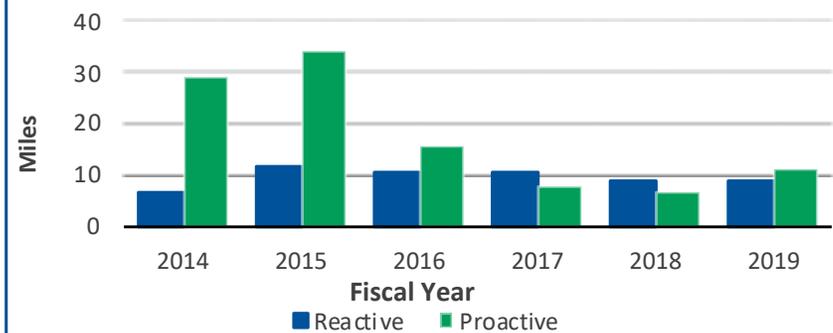
Recurring Confirmed Dry Weather Backup Segments



FY19 Confirmed Sewer Backup Causes

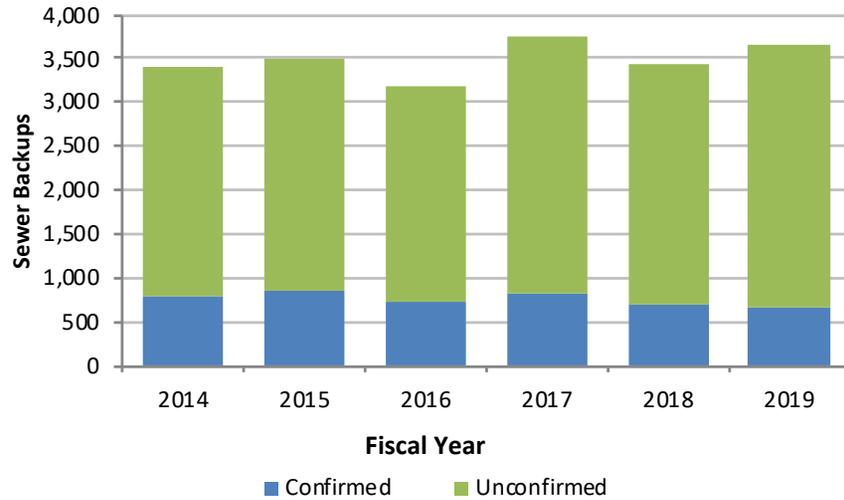


Sewer Cleaning Miles

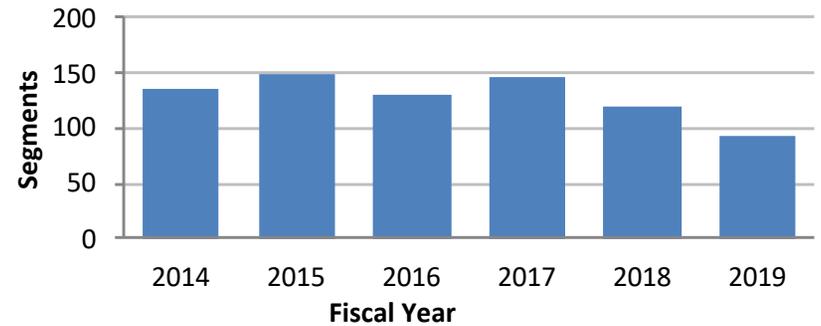


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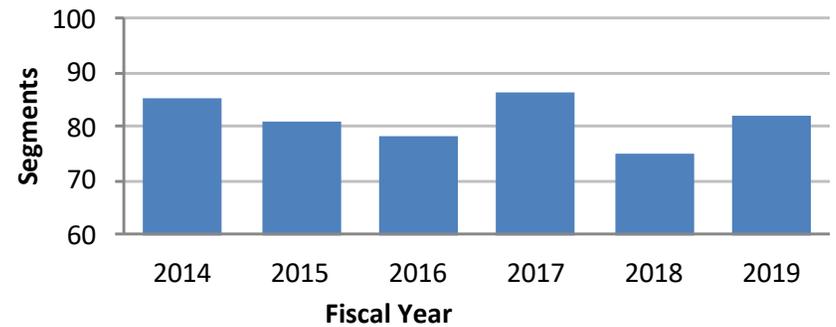
Sewer Backup Complaints



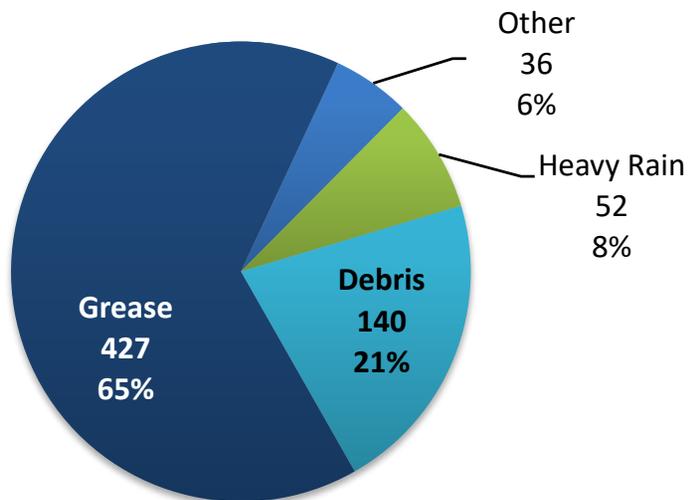
Recurring Confirmed Backup Segments



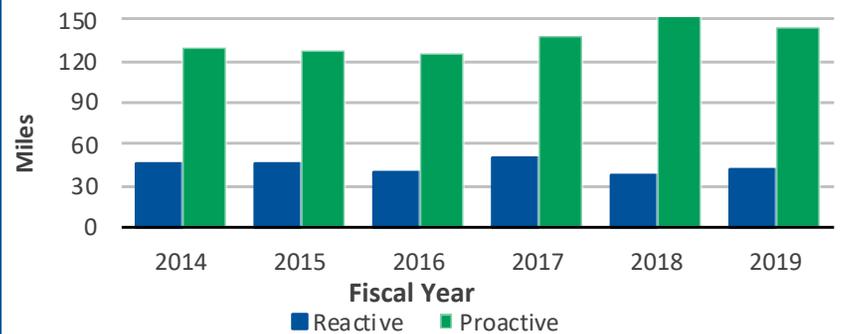
Recurring Confirmed Dry Weather Backup Segments



FY19 Confirmed Sewer Backup Causes

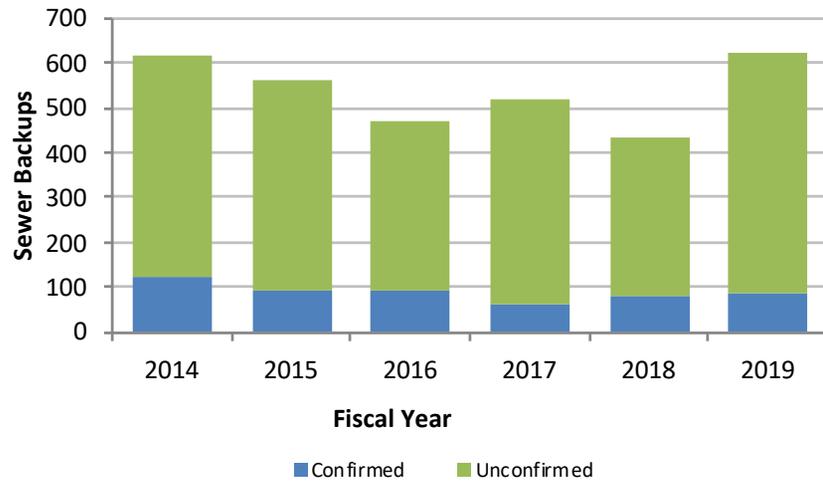


Sewer Cleaning Miles

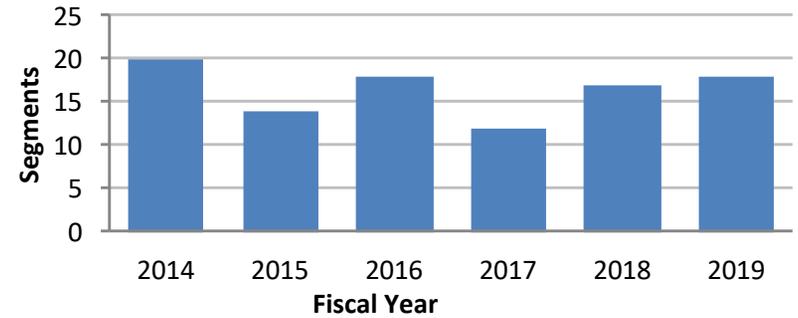


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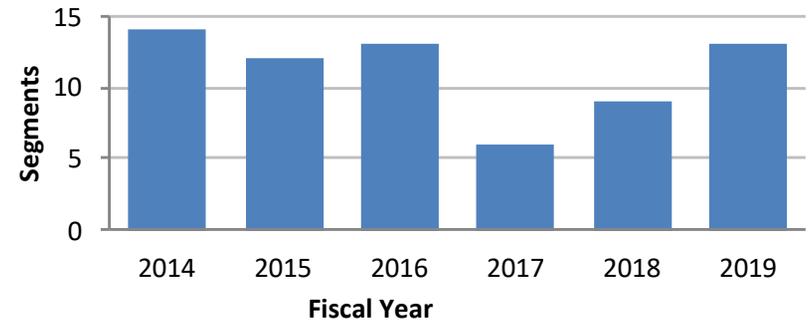
Sewer Backup Complaints



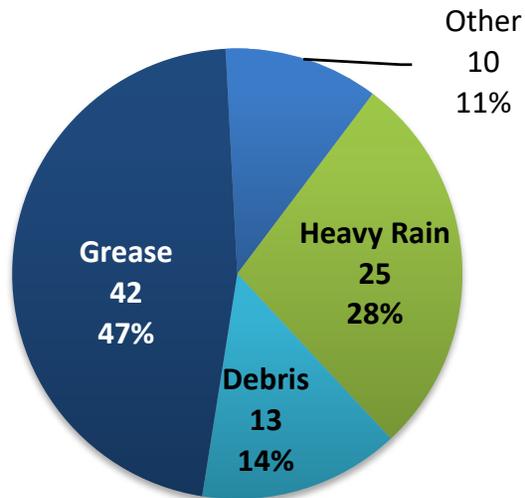
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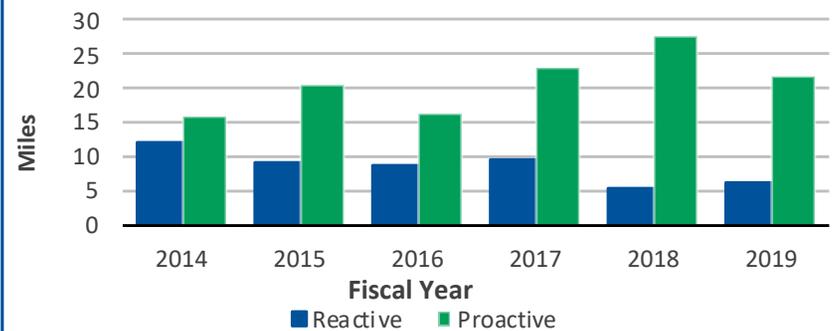
Recurring Confirmed Dry Weather Backup Segments



FY19 Confirmed Sewer Backup Causes

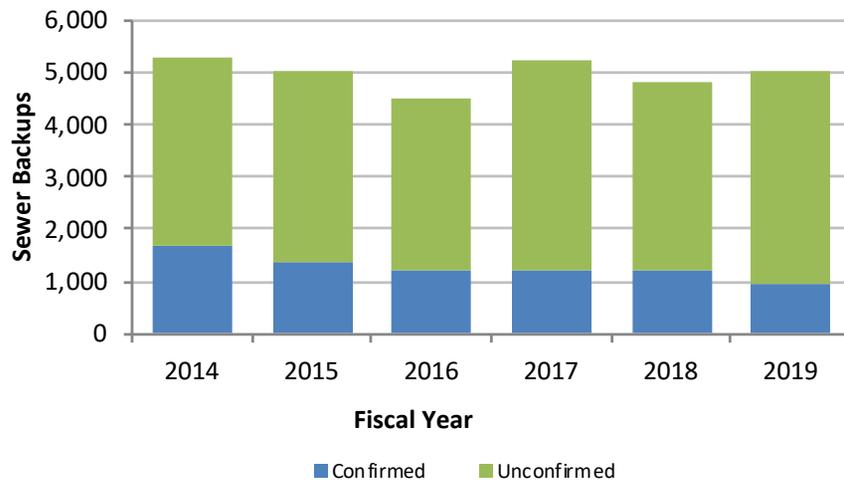


Sewer Cleaning Miles

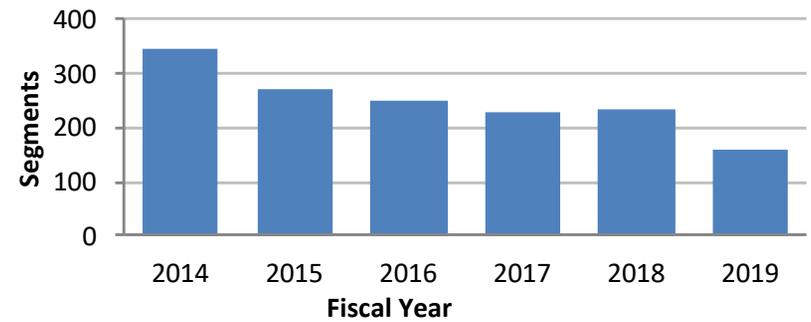


QUEENS

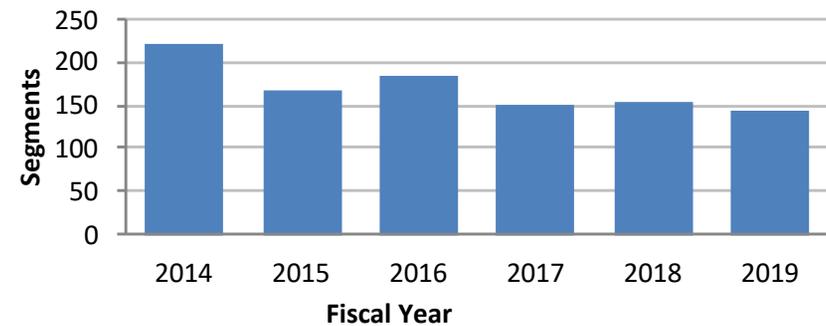
Sewer Backup Complaints



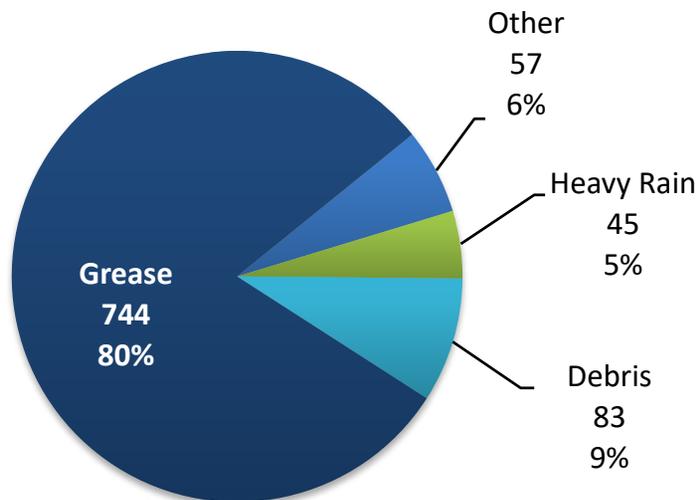
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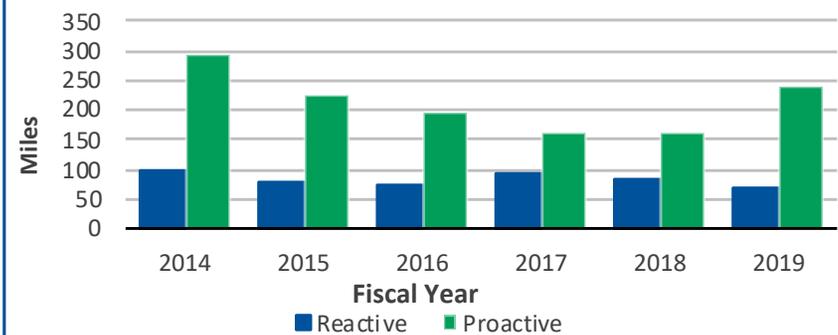
Recurring Confirmed Dry Weather Backup Segments



FY19 Confirmed Sewer Backup Causes

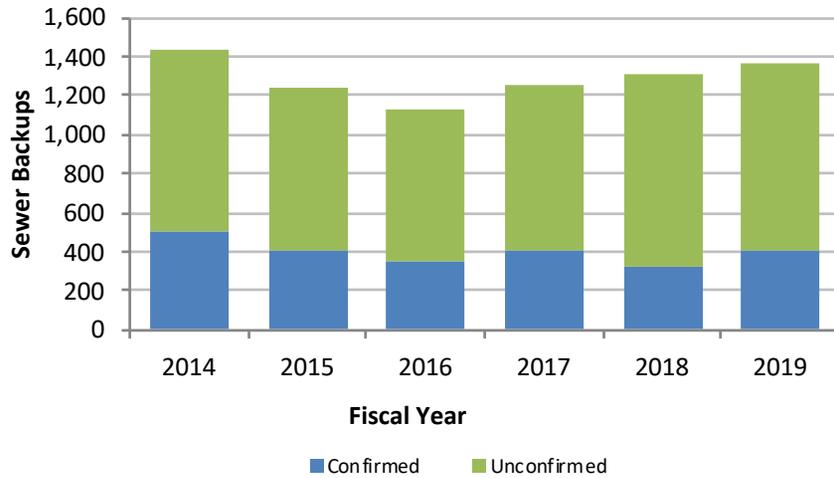


Sewer Cleaning Miles

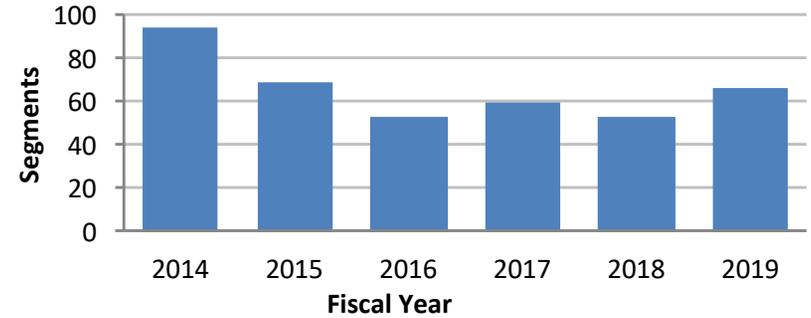


STATEN ISLAND

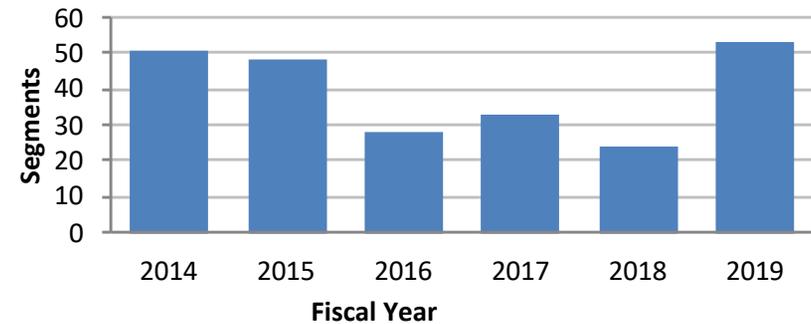
Sewer Backup Complaints



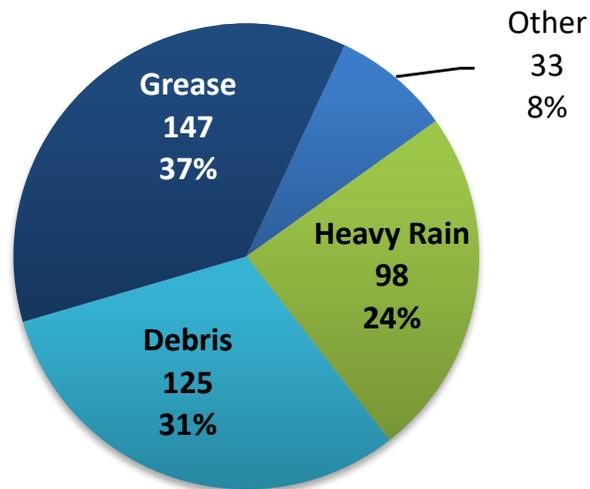
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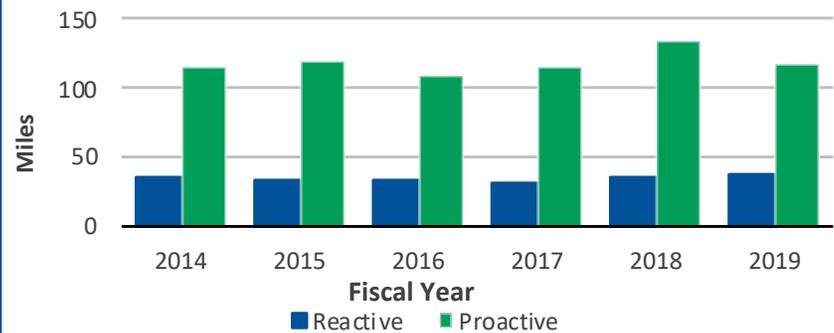
Recurring Confirmed Dry Weather Backup Segments



FY19 Confirmed Sewer Backup Causes



Sewer Cleaning Miles





**Environmental
Protection**