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Notes related to the continued use or decommissioning of Cromaglass septic systems in the Pinelands.

In 2002, the Commission established a pilot program to evaluate the nitrogen removal capabilities of five "alternate design" septic systems in the Pinelands Area. The Cromaglass treatment system was one of the systems authorized for use at that time.

The first Cromaglass treatment unit was installed in 2005. In November 2006 the Commission suspended new Cromaglass installations based upon effluent monitoring that indicated that the system was not reducing nitrogen levels to the degree necessary to meet Pinelands water quality standards.

The pilot program provides that property owners shall not be held liable for any system that might perform poorly, provided the system was properly operated and maintained.

It is noteworthy that with proper operation and maintenance, particularly periodically pumping the septic tank to remove solids as is required with all septic systems, use of the Cromaglass septic system does not pose a sanitary or health related problem. The suspension was based solely on the fact that the system was not meeting the Commission's ecologically based groundwater quality standard.

The manufacturer of the Cromaglass system attempted to improve the technology's nitrogen removal performance but was ultimately unable to render the system compliant with Pinelands water quality standards. As a result, in 2014, the Commission eliminated the Cromaglass system from the pilot program.

At that time, the Commission determined that any owner of a Cromaglass system that wished to retain it could do so provided it was operated and maintained in conformance with NJ state standards. Those standards require that all advanced wastewater pretreatment devices to be operated and maintained by an authorized service provider. If however, an owner of a Cromaglass system wished, they could remove the Cromaglass treatment unit and replace it with a standard septic tank meeting NJDEP requirements. Alternatively the owner could convert the Cromaglass unit to function as a standard septic tank meeting NJDEP standards. Homeowners wishing to remove or convert the Cromaglass unit are advised to consult their county health department to obtain permits prior to converting their system.

If you have any questions related to the Cromaglass septic system or any other aspect of the Commission's alternate design treatment systems pilot program, please contact Ed Wengrowski, the Commission's Environmental Technologies Coordinator.

For more information you may want visit the Commission website at <http://www.nj.gov/pinelands/>