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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
DIVISION OF WATER MONITORING AND STANDARDS

Request For Comments on The Draft 2014 303(d) List of Water Quality Limited Waters Pursuant to Section 303(d) of the Federal Clean Water Act at 33 U.S.C. 1313(d) and the New Jersey Water Quality Management Planning Rules at N.J.A.C. 7:15

Public Notice

Take Notice that the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (Department) is seeking public comment on the draft 2014 303(d) List of Water Quality Limited Waters (303(d) List), which has been posted on the Department's Web site at <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/wms/bears/assessment.htm>. The draft 2014 303(d) List is proposed pursuant to the Section 303(d) of the Federal Clean Water Act at 33 U.S.C. 1313(d), the New Jersey Water Quality Planning Act at N.J.S.A. 58:11A-7, and the Water Quality Management Planning rules, N.J.A.C. 7:15.

The Department is required to seek public comment on the draft 2014 303(d) List, including priority ranking for development of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), prior to requesting approval from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Interested persons may submit comments on the draft 2014 303(d) List by email to sandra.cohen@dep.nj.gov or by regular mail to: Sandra Cohen, Research Scientist 1, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Water Monitoring and Standards, Bureau of Environmental Analysis, Restoration and Standards, P.O. Box 420 (Mail Code 401-04I), 401 East State Street, Trenton, New Jersey, 08625-0420. **All comments must be submitted by March 2, 2016**, which is 30 days after the date of publication in the New Jersey Register. A hard copy of the draft 2014 303(d) List may be requested by contacting the Bureau of Environmental Analysis, Restoration and Standards at 609-633-1441.

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After review and careful consideration of comments received, the Department will make any necessary revisions, finalize the 2014 303(d) List and submit it to USEPA for approval. Upon receipt of approval from USEPA, the Department will publish the final 2014 303(d) List, along with the 2014 Integrated Report and supporting documents, on the Department's website at <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/wms/bears/assessment.htm>. A public notice announcing adoption of the final 2014 303(d) List will be published in a subsequent New Jersey Register.

All states are required pursuant to Section 305(b) of the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) (33 U.S.C. 1315(b) to biennially prepare and submit to USEPA a report addressing the overall water quality of the State's waters, including support of designated uses (the Integrated List of Waters, or "Integrated List"). States are also required to develop a list of waters that currently do not meet, or are not expected to meet, applicable water quality standards after the implementation of technology-based controls. This list is known as the 303(d) List of Water Quality Limited Waters or "303(d) List." The 303(d) List includes a priority ranking for scheduling TMDLs, as well identifying TMDLs expected to be completed in the next two years. These two lists, along with strategies to maintain and improve water quality and other pertinent information, comprise the Integrated Water Quality Assessment Report (Integrated Report).

The Integrated Report identifies where regulatory and other actions have been successful in restoring water quality, where water quality improvement is needed, where high quality waters are threatened and/or need protection, and where further study and/or research is needed to address unresolved water quality issues, such as nutrient impacts on aquatic life uses. These results provide a sound scientific foundation to inform and prioritize the State's water regulatory and management programs. This state scale water quality information is required by the CWA to develop the overall national scale assessment of water quality. The scientific protocols and methods used to assess data and develop the 2014 Integrated Report are explained in the Department's 2014 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Methods (Methods Document).

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The draft 2014 Methods Document was published for public review and comment on July 21, 2014 (see 46 N.J.R. 1719(c)). After considering the public comments received, the Department finalized the 2014 Methods Document. A summary of the comments received on the draft 2014 Methods Document and agency responses is included as an Appendix in the final 2014 Methods Document, which is published on the Department's Web site at <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/wms/bears/assessment.htm>. The draft 2014 303(d) List was developed using the final 2014 Methods Document and all readily available data submitted in response to the Department's notice of solicitation published on February 19, 2013 (see 45 N.J.R. 378(a)).