

PA Environment Digest

An Update On Environmental Issues In PA

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EPA Releases Evaluations Of State Chesapeake Bay Cleanup Plans, Including PA's

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Thursday released its evaluations of the final Phase II Watershed Implementation Plans from Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia.

Completion of the plans marks a significant stage in the Chesapeake Bay cleanup effort, and represents the local level planning needed to continue accelerating implementation of the necessary practices to restore the health and economic engine of the Bay watershed's streams and rivers.

The plans were developed by the states and the District with support from EPA, and in collaboration with local governments and conservation districts. They outline steps each jurisdiction will take toward restoring clean water to the thousands of streams and rivers that make up the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and improving the quality of life for the more than 17 million people who live in the watershed.

"While significant progress continues to be made across the watershed, the Phase II WIPs represent a transition from planning to implementing the necessary practices at the local level," said EPA mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Shawn M. Garvin during a conference call with reporters today. "We will continue to work closely with the states and the District as we reaffirm our shared commitment for restoring this incredibly valuable national resource."

Regional Administrator Garvin acknowledged that the jurisdictions are already doing much of this work, consistent with their Phase I WIP commitments. He added that the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership, including state and federal officials, have committed to having all of the needed pollution control measures in place to fully restore the Bay by no later than 2025.

A copy of EPA's comments on Pennsylvania's plan [is available online](#).

EPA Comments

While EPA's comments on Pennsylvania's Bay cleanup plan said DEP's submission showed improvement, there continues to be concern on the agency's part on whether the state will follow through with its commitments.

"EPA appreciates the steps that Pennsylvania will take to continue working with local partners, including providing local area implementation targets, working with communities who choose to refine these targets and collaborating with Lancaster, Lycoming and York counties on local strategies. EPA

is also pleased to upgrade the wastewater sector from “enhanced” to “ongoing” oversight based on additional information in the final Phase II WIP and milestones.

“However, EPA will maintain enhanced oversight for the agriculture section until Pennsylvania more fully addresses the issues (in its detailed evaluation). EPA will also maintain enhanced oversight for Pennsylvania’s trading program until recommendations from the recent offset and trading program assessment are addressed, most notably EPA’s concerns with the baseline for credit generation.

“EPA is maintaining backstop actions for the urban stormwater sector given that the final Phase II WIP and milestones do not provide clear strategies for how the Commonwealth will achieve 40 to 50 percent reductions in nutrient and sediment pollution from existing urban lands.”

Reaction

[Chesapeake Bay Foundation](#) Vice President Kim Coble issued this statement following CBF’s review of EPA’s comments on the state Bay cleanup plans--

“We agree with EPA’s comments, and share their concerns about the lack of specificity on actions that will be taken at the local level. The states are working to improve the local details, and CBF will continue to monitor those efforts and encourage local jurisdictions to develop plans that are transparent and accountable.

“It is important to remember that pollution reductions to the Bay to date have come largely through a strong commitment to upgrading wastewater treatment plants and installing conservation practices on farms through existing federal and state cost-share programs. We must ensure those efforts continue. A comparable level of commitment at the local level is now necessary to address long-standing pollution problems from cities, suburbs, and some farms that continue to hold back recovery of local waterways and the Bay.

“We all contribute pollution to local rivers, streams, and the Chesapeake Bay, and all must do their part to reduce that pollution. If we don’t continue to make progress and focus accountability for that progress at the local level we will continue to have polluted water, human health hazards, and lost jobs. Restoring clean water will not just benefit us; it will benefit our children and future generations.”