



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION III
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029

APR 12 2017

Lisa D. Daniels, Director
Bureau of Safe Drinking Water
Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
400 Market Street
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17101

Dear Ms. Daniels,

Thank you for your letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), dated February 24, 2017, regarding how the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) plans to address its funding challenges, personnel shortfalls and declining Public Water System Supervision (PWSS) Program implementation performance.

EPA understands that Pennsylvania is working on draft proposed rulemaking that will establish new annual fees and increase existing permit fees for all drinking water systems in Pennsylvania. PADEP plans to use the revenue generated from these fees to fill existing gaps in staffing levels and to improve program implementation performance. EPA also understands that Pennsylvania plans to pursue an aggressive action plan and schedule throughout this process.

EPA is encouraged by PADEP's plan to increase program revenue through its regulatory fee package providing dedicated funding to PADEP's PWSS Program. EPA remains concerned about Pennsylvania's program performance in the interim until staff are hired in 2018 and trained and productive in the year afterward. EPA recommends PADEP seek a temporary funding source to begin the hiring process earlier. EPA agrees that until the final rulemaking is promulgated and new staff can be hired and trained, Pennsylvania should continue to prioritize drinking water sanitary survey inspections and target its limited resources to ensure the highest level of public health protection. EPA also agrees that PADEP should submit quarterly updates on the progress of the action plan and alert EPA to any new challenges or changes in the proposed timeline.

Thank you for submitting the action plan to increase staffing resources. If you have any questions or would like to further discuss this issue, please feel free to contact me or have your staff contact Kelly Moran, EPA's Pennsylvania State Program Manager at (215) 814-2331.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dominique Lueckenhoff".

Dominique Lueckenhoff, Acting Director
Water Protection Division