



April 2025 Report to the Citizens Advisory Council
(New and updated information in italics)

Regulatory Update (Detailed summaries included in respective program sections)

- Please refer to the [DEP Rolling Regulatory Agenda](#) for the full Regulatory Update.
- Proposed Rulemaking – Corrective Amendments to RACT Requirements for Major Sources of NO_x and VOCs (#7-584): The draft proposed regulation was presented to the Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee (AQTAC) on April 4, 2024, and Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) on May 14, 2024. The Environmental Quality Board (EQB) adopted the proposed regulation on November 12, 2024. The proposed regulation was published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on January 25, 2025, for a 62-day public comment period that *closes* on March 28, 2025. Public hearings *were held on* February 25 and 26.
- Proposed Rulemaking – Notification Requirements for Unauthorized Discharges to Waters of the Commonwealth (#7-587): The draft proposed regulation was presented to the Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) on September 21, 2023, the Agricultural Advisory Board on October 19, 2023, Public Water System Technical Assistance Center Board on October 26, 2023, and WRAC again on May 16, 2024. The EQB adopted the proposed regulation on November 12, 2024.
- Proposed Rulemaking – Water Quality Standards; Class A Stream Redesignations (#7-583): The EQB adopted the proposed regulation on September 10, 2024. The proposed regulation was published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on February 1, 2025, for a 45-day public comment period that *closed* on March 18, 2025. A virtual public hearing *was held on* March 13.
- Proposed Rulemaking – Administration of the Land Recycling Program (#7-575): The draft proposed regulation was discussed with the Cleanup Standards Scientific Advisory Board on October 10, 2022, January 23, 2023, and May 31, 2023. The EQB adopted the proposed regulation on March 12, 2024. The proposed regulation was published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on July 13, 2024, for a 60-day public comment period that closed on September 11, 2024. Public hearings were held on August 19, August 27, and September 4, 2024. IRRC’s comments were received on October 11, 2024.
- Final-Omitted Rulemaking - Blast Site Clarification for Noncoal Mining Operations (#7-586): The draft final-omitted regulation was discussed with the Aggregate Advisory Board on August 28, 2024. The EQB adopted the final-omitted regulation on November 12, 2024. *The final-omitted regulation is scheduled for IRRC consideration on April 10, 2025.*
- Draft Final Rulemaking – Triennial Review of Water Quality Standards (#7-577): The draft proposed regulation was discussed with the Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) on May 19 and November 17, 2022, and the Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB) on December 8, 2022. The EQB adopted the proposed regulation on July 11, 2023. The proposed regulation was published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on October 7, 2023, for a 45-day public comment period that closed on November 21, 2023. A virtual public hearing was held on November 14, 2023. The draft final regulation was presented to AAB on April 17, 2024, and WRAC on May 16, 2024.
- Draft Final Rulemaking – Water Quality Standards – Site-Specific Water Quality Criteria (#7-571): The draft proposed regulation was discussed with the AAB on March 15, 2023, and WRAC on March 16, 2023. The EQB adopted the proposed regulation on July 11, 2023. The proposed regulation was published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on November 4, 2023, for a 45-day public comment period that

closed on December 19, 2023. A virtual public hearing was held on December 5, 2023. The draft final regulation was presented to WRAC on May 16, 2024, and discussed with the AAB on June 18, 2024.

Public Comment Periods

To see the latest DEP and EQB public comment periods, visit DEP's [eComment website](#).

Proposals Open for Public Comment

- *Federal Consistency under the Coastal Zone Management Act - Erie Western Pennsylvania Port Authority - Proposed Maintenance Dredging along Presque Isle Bay and Lake Erie (opened 3/22, closes 4/7)*
- *Environmental Assessment Approvals for PENNVEST Funding Consideration (April 2025) (opened 3/15, closes 4/14)*
- *Interstate Pollution Transport Reduction: Proposed 2025 Ozone Season Nitrogen Oxide Emission Limits for Nonelectric Generating Units (opened 3/8, closes 3/24)*
- Proposed General Plan Approval and/or General Operating Permit for Human or Animal Crematory Incinerators (BAQ-GPA/GP-14) Update (opened 2/8, closes 3/24)
- Proposed Rulemaking: Corrections to Additional RACT Requirements for Major Sources of NOx and VOCs for the 2015 Ozone NAAQS (RACT 3) (#7-584) (opened 1/25, closes 3/28)

Recently Closed Comment Periods

- Draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Discharges from Small Municipal Storm Sewer Systems (PAG-13) (opened 1/18, closed 3/19)
- Draft New and Revised Water Quality Assessment Listing Methodology (opened 1/18, closed 3/19)
- Proposed Rulemaking: Water Quality Standards; Class A Stream Redesignations (#7-583) (opened 2/1, closed 3/18)
- *Draft Technical Guidance: Process for Evaluation Daily Volume (opened 2/15, closed 3/17)*
- Pennsylvania's PM2.5 Exceptional Event Analyses for June 6-8, 2023, and June 28 - July 1, 2023 (opened 2/15, closed 3/17)
- Draft Technical Guidance, Substantive Revision: Public Water Supply Manual - Part II: Community Water System Design Standards (394-2125-004) (opened 11/30/2024, closed 3/3/2025)
- Draft Technical Guidance, New: Guidelines for Submittal of Benching Plans (opened 1/25, closed 2/24)

Communications Monthly Press Releases

To see the latest DEP press releases, visit DEP's [news releases webpage](#).

Press Releases Issued

February 25 – Shapiro Administration Releases Test Results from SPS Technologies Fire; No Threat to Air Quality or Drinking Water

February 26 – Shapiro Administration Launches RISE PA Initiative to Create Energy Jobs, Cut Costs, Grow Pennsylvania's Energy & Manufacturing Industries, and Lower Toxic Air Pollution

March 6 – Shapiro Administration Holds Energy Transfer Accountable for Contaminating Drinking Water with Pipeline Leak

March 10 – DEP Provides Update on Lancaster County Plane Crash Cleanup

March 11 – DEP to Host Public Hearing on North Centre Township HSCA Investigation in Columbia County

Active and Abandoned Mine Operations

[Act 54 info removed because it's completed]

Final-Omitted Rulemaking: Blast Site Clarification for Noncoal Mining Operations

The Bureau of Mining Programs, in conjunction with District Mining operations, have developed a final-omitted rulemaking to correct an inconsistency between two chapters of the Office of Active and Abandoned Mining's regulations by changing one use of the term "blast area" to "blast site" in § 77.564(g)(7). The correction will ensure that the language used in Chapter 77 is consistent with the definitions of both terms in the Department's regulations on storage, handling, and use of explosives in Chapter 211. The rulemaking package was presented to the EQB at their November 2024 meeting and was approved. *The next step will be IRRC consideration at their April 10, 2025 meeting.*

Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Funding

The Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation's (BAMR) 2025 AML/AMD Grant Program is currently accepting grant applications at [AML/AMD Grant Program | Department of Environmental Protection | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#). This year's application rounds are:

- *Round 1 - March 3, 2025 through 11:59pm on April 25, 2025*
- *Round 2 - September 2, 2025 through 11:59pm on October 24, 2025*

An Initial Project Consultation meeting has now been made an application requirement to be scheduled at least one month prior to the opening of an application round.

On March 13, 2025, a total of \$1,448,461 was awarded to five successful grant applicants that applied during round 3 of 3 of the 2024 AML/AMD Grant Program. The applicants are:

- *Bradford County Conservation District, Bradford County at \$483,720.00 for the engineering design and permitting for AML reclamation on eight AML features and water sampling on two AMD sites, within State Game Lands 12 and 36. Grant project name is Barclay (SGL 12 & 36 Design).*
- *Taylor Borough, Lackawanna County at \$265,620.00 for the demolition of an abandoned Hazardous Equipment and Facility. Grant project name is Taylor South Main (Boiler Building Removal).*
- *Avoca Borough, Luerene County at \$137,130.00 for the initial testing and evaluation of abandoned coal waste material located in West Avoca Park. Grant project name is West Avoca (Little League Pile Design).*
- *Luzerne Conservation District, Luerene County at \$140,740.00 for the engineering design and permitting to reclaim AML and abate AMD in State Game Lands 260. Grant project name is Dogtown (SGL 260 Design).*
- *Westmoreland Conservation District, Westmoreland County at \$421,251.60 for the conceptual project development for the Irwin Discharge Treatment Project. Grant project name is Sharon-Shawtown West.*

Additionally, funding in the amount of over \$10.6 million has been recommended for another project under the Abandoned Mine Lands Economic Revitalization (AMLER) Program.

Air Quality

Regulatory State Implementation Plan (SIP) Revisions

Reasonably Available Control Technology (RACT III)

The rulemaking was published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on November 12, 2022. The Federally mandated deadline for compliance by regulated facilities was January 1, 2023. A SIP revision was submitted to EPA on January 13, 2023, for their review and action. However, 25 Pa. Code § 129.115(c) (relating to written notification, compliance demonstration and recordkeeping and reporting requirements), was not included in the SIP revision due to administrative and mathematical errors in the mass-equivalent basis factors. To correct these errors and a cross-reference error in § 129.115(d), the Department drafted revised language which it presented to the Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee (AQTAC) and the CAC on April 4 and May 14, 2024, respectively. The Department presented the proposed rulemaking to the EQB on November 12, 2024, who voted unanimously to adopt it. The proposed rulemaking was published for public comment on January 25, 2025. *Public hearings were held on February 25 and 26 and no comments were received.* Written comments must be received by the EQB by March 28, 2025. *DEP anticipates bringing the final-form rulemaking to AQTAC in the second quarter of 2025.*

Air Quality regional staff reviewed 62 of 63 RACT II equals RACT III determinations and 26 of 94 case-by-case RACT determinations received from major sources of NO_x and VOC. A public comment period and hearing is being offered for each of these permitting actions. DEP submitted 57 RACT II equal RACT III determinations to EPA on October 30, 2024.

State Plans and Delegation of Federal Plans

The Department is proposing to amend 25 Pa. Code Chapter 122 (relating to National Standards of Performance for new stationary sources) to provide the express legal authority for the Department to request delegation of authority from the EPA to implement and enforce the requirements of an applicable Federal Plan established by the EPA in 40 CFR Part 62. The Department presented the draft proposed regulation to AQTAC and the CAC on April 4 and May 14, 2024, respectively. *The Department anticipates presenting the proposed regulation to the EQB in the second quarter of 2025.*

Non-Regulatory SIP Revisions

2010 Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂) National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) Redesignation

On February 22, 2023, the EPA Region III Administrator sent Governor Shapiro a “120-Day Letter” proposing to reclassify several townships in Westmoreland County and Cambria County from “attainment” to “nonattainment” for the 2010 sulfur dioxide (SO₂) NAAQS. The Department reviewed the technical support document accompanying the “120-Day Letter” and responded with comments on June 22, 2023.

On February 7, 2024, EPA proposed creating a new 2010 SO₂ NAAQS non-attainment area, specifically Lower Yoder Township (Cambria County); St Clair Township, Seward Borough (Westmoreland County), and New Florence Borough (Westmoreland County). EPA published a 45-day public comment period on February 12, 2024. On December 17, 2024, EPA published reclassification of the area from “attainment” to “nonattainment” effective January 16, 2025. Within 18 months of the effective date, DEP is required to submit a state implementation plan (SIP) to EPA demonstrating how the 2010 SO₂ NAAQS will be attained in these partial counties. *On February 17, 2025, Seward Generation filed a Petition for Administrative Reconsideration with EPA.*

2015 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards

On July 30, 2024, EPA approved Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and New Jersey’s request to voluntarily reclassify the multistate Philadelphia Area from moderate to serious for the 2015 ozone standard. The reclassification avoids an EPA finding of failure to attain the 2015 ozone standard, disapproval of DEP’s September 2023 attainment demonstration and a sanction clock. The serious nonattainment area SIP revision will be due to EPA by January 1, 2026, with a new attainment date of August 3, 2027.

Beaver SO₂ Redesignation Request and Maintenance Plan

On May 18, 2024, DEP opened the public comment period for the Beaver Redesignation Request and Maintenance Plan for the 2010 SO₂ NAAQS. The public comment period closed on June 21, 2024. A public hearing to receive comments was held on June 18, 2024 at the DEP Southwest Regional Office. The Redesignation Request and Maintenance Plan was submitted to EPA on August 15, 2024.

Harrisburg/York PM 2.5 Air Quality Maintenance Plan

On September 28, 2024, DEP opened the public comment period for the Harrisburg/York Air Quality Maintenance Plan for the 2006 PM_{2.5} NAAQS. The Department provided the opportunity for a public hearing on October 30, 2024, at Rachel Carson State Office Building. The public comment period ended on November 1, 2024. After preparing a Comment and Response document, DEP submitted the SIP revision to EPA on February 7, 2025.

PM_{2.5} NAAQS

On February 7, 2024, EPA lowered the annual National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Fine Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5} NAAQS) from 12.0 to 9.0 micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m³). EPA identified seven Pennsylvania counties in non-attainment based on 2020-2022 air quality monitoring data. On December 21, 2024, DEP published four proposed non-attainment areas: Allegheny County; Cumberland, Dauphin and York Counties; Lancaster County; and Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties. Public hearings were held on January 21 and 23 and the public comment period was extended to January 28, 2025. *DEP anticipates submitting its PM_{2.5} non-attainment recommendations to EPA soon.*

PM_{2.5} Exceptional Event Analysis

On February 15, 2025, the Department published for public comment an Exceptional Event Analysis for PM_{2.5} in York County for elevated levels of fine particulate matter caused by the summer of 2024 Canadian wildfires. The public comment period *ended* March 17, 2025.

2008 Ozone NAAQS VOC RACT

On August 13, 2018, DEP submitted to EPA two SIP revisions to satisfy certain RACT requirements for sources of VOC emissions required for the 2008 8-hour ozone NAAQS. On December 14, 2020, EPA published a full approval of the SIP submittals. The approval was challenged in the Third Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals and on September 3, 2021, the court granted EPA's request for remand without vacatur of the Agency's final full approval. After reconsideration, EPA proposed on May 17, 2024, to partially approve and partially disapprove the August 13, 2018, SIP submittals. EPA proposed disapproval of the SIP submittals related to Control Technique Guidelines (CTGs) and control of VOC emissions from industrial cleaning solvents. DEP submitted comments on June 13, 2024. On August 16, 2024, EPA published its partial approval/disapproval with an effective date of September 16, 2024, starting an 18-month sanctions clock. DEP is working with EPA to address the deficiencies.

O&G Methane State Plan (OOOOC)

BAQ presented the Department's proposal to incorporate the federal Emissions Guidelines for Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions from Existing Crude Oil & Natural Gas Facilities (40 CFR Part 60 Subpart OOOOC) into a State Plan to AQTAC, SBCAC, MSC, CAC/EJAB and CDAC on October 10, October 23, October 29, November 12 and December 12, respectively. The Department presented its proposal a second time to AQTAC and SBCAC on February 6 and 26, 2025, respectively. The Department must submit its State Plan to EPA no later than March 8, 2026.

Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee

The next scheduled meeting is May 8, 2025.

Small Business Compliance Advisory Committee

The next scheduled meeting is May 22, 2025.

Energy Programs Office

Transportation

Alternative Fuel Incentive Grant (AFIG)

The AFIG Program offers grant funding for clean, alternative fuel projects in Pennsylvania and investment in Pennsylvania's energy sector. Approximately \$5 million in grants is available for school districts, municipal authorities, political subdivisions, nonprofit entities, corporations, limited liability companies or partnerships incorporated or registered in the commonwealth.

The second application acceptance period for the 2024 AFIG program closed on December 20, 2024. The program received 39 applications requesting a total of \$5,134,785.17 in AFIG funding. The applications include 25 vehicle purchase projects, nine refueling infrastructure projects, and five innovative technology projects. *Applications are under review.*

The Alternative Fuel Vehicle Rebate program was renewed under new guidelines beginning September 6, 2024. *The program continues to go strong with 245 rebates totaling \$806,500 issued between September 6 and March 17, 2025. 116 of the 245 rebates were claimed by qualifying low-income residents.*

Energy Security

Statewide Microgrid Study

In early March, Pennsylvania released a new study entitled Safeguarding Pennsylvania - Resilient Microgrids in Our Communities. The study looks at microgrids to increase not only energy reliability but resilience in the wake of disasters. Furthermore, the study highlights an actionable pathway to utilize microgrids, ensuring critical facilities remain operational when we need them the most. Funded by the U.S. DOE State Energy Program Formula Award, the Pennsylvania Energy Office, in partnership with Smart Electric Power Alliance, developed a data-driven approach to identify critical facilities throughout Pennsylvania which may be prime candidates for microgrid deployment. The study considered 23,937 sites which currently host at least one of 17 critical facility types. Operational and planning data obtained through partnership with Pennsylvania Electric Distribution Companies was then utilized to identify prime locations for microgrid development. The study identified 28 potential locations for front of the meter microgrids and 240 potential locations for behind the meter microgrid deployment. The report shares a repeatable framework for critical facility identification and site selection, microgrid use cases and scenarios, microgrid deployment strategies, and a microgrid deployment action plan. In addition, a publicly available GIS mapping tool was developed to provide further details. The report and mapping tool are linked on the Energy Assurance page of the pa.gov website.

Monthly Fuels Sector Calls

EPO and DEP's Director of Emergency Response have coordinated monthly Fuels Sector Calls with the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) to provide situational awareness regarding supply concerns related to heating and transportation fuels. Various State Agencies, including PUC, PennDOT, Agriculture, Revenue, and State Police, attend the meeting as well as PA private Fuel Sector stakeholders such as the state propane and petroleum associations, retailers and refineries. The group discussion is to identify any issues that could be problematic. The next meeting is scheduled for *April 11, 2025.*

Climate Change

Shared Energy Manager

The Shared Energy Manager (SEM) program was designed to assist local governments in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with on-the-ground, practical support from a professional energy manager contracted by the

DEP Energy Programs Office to conduct energy assessments, renewable energy studies, and other services to implement elements of their climate action plans. A contract has been awarded to Wilson Engineering Services (WES), which will serve as the Shared Energy Manager for the DEP Energy Programs Office's local government participants. The programs will run from 2024-2027, with 20 participants per cohort for a total of 80 participants over 4 years.

The application for the 2025 cohort of the Shared Energy Manager program closed officially on January 31st. The new cohort has been selected and kick-off calls have started with Wilson Engineering to determine what work will be done for each of the new participants. The 2025 cohort has 20 total participants made up of 2 counties, the water and sewer authority of the City of Pittsburgh, 14 municipalities, and for the first time 3 school districts. *Kick-off calls have been conducted throughout February and March 2025. On-site energy assessments have been completed for Mechanicsburg Borough (3/5), Uwchlan Township (3/25), and Springfield Township (3/26).*

Climate Network

The PA Climate Change Mitigation and Resiliency Network was established through a multi-agency MOU. The network has been formed to continue to deliver climate training to professionals within state government as well as other sectors and industries (academia, private, non-profit). PA Climate Resilience and Mitigation Network training modules have been completed and they are currently available to view on the PA Department of General Services GreenGov website at: [Pennsylvania Climate Change Mitigation and Resilience Network \(pa.gov\)](https://www.pa.gov/government/energy-environment/climate-change-mitigation-and-resilience-network). The network also seeks to create a safe platform to address the information sharing and efforts necessary to seriously address the impacts of climate change on our business units and in our communities.

The Commonwealth agency partners which developed the climate network have reached out to those higher education institutions which have existing Master Agreements with the state of Pennsylvania to gauge interest in taking over its management. The PA agencies will continue to partner with the College or University selected to further develop and maintain the network, its members, and the information and education provided to the residents of the Commonwealth going forward. The Commonwealth received two responses to the request for letters of interest, Pennsylvania State University and Drexel University. Both will be asked to submit a full proposal for taking over management of the network and a winner will be selected in the Spring of 2025.

Climate Change Advisory Committee

The latest CCAC meeting was held Tuesday, February 18, 2025, in Room 105 of the Rachel Carson State Office Building, and via Microsoft Teams. The meeting featured a presentation by EPO staff on upcoming Climate Pollution Reduction Planning Grant public outreach, including a preview of the Story Map developed for use during these outreach sessions. EPO staff also provided a presentation detailing RISE PA application requirements and evaluation criteria. A copy of all presentation and other meeting materials are available on the [CCAC webpage](#). *The next CCAC meeting is scheduled to take place Tuesday, April 22, 2025.*

Energy Efficiency

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)-Home Energy Rebates: EPO is developing two programs within the Inflation Reduction Act Home Energy Rebates, Section 50121 Home Efficiency Rebate Program (HER) and Section 50122 Home Electrification Rebates Program (HEAR). The HEAR Program will provide point-of-sale consumer discounts to enable households across America to electrify their homes. These point-of-sale rebates are immediate, off-the-top discount when making qualifying electrification purchases. HER will encourage performance-based residential energy efficiency retrofits for affordable multi-family housing. These programs offer rebates to households earning 150% AMI or less (with higher rebates for households earning less than 80% AMI) -- this will ensure that Pennsylvanians with the highest energy burdens can afford decarbonization upgrades. In late summer 2024, EPO began a DOE cohort to assist in the development of the HEAR and HER applications. Throughout October, five public engagement sessions were held in Shamokin, Pottstown,

Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and online. In January 2025, EPO rebranded these programs as the Penn Energy Savers Program and launched www.pennenergysavers.com to provide Pennsylvania residents with information about the program (Frequently Asked Questions, Income Eligibility by household size and county, etc.).

In August 2024, EPO selected Resource Innovations (RI) for their HEAR designer and implementer. The Program Application was submitted to DOE in mid-October and the Blueprint Implementation Plan in mid-November. DOE fully awarded EPO funding for the HEAR program on January 16th. In *March*, EPO worked to determine how this program will be affected by new and evolving federal guidance, as well as on the establishment of a Qualified Contractor Network. The goal is to launch HEAR *by mid-2025*.

The *HER* Program Application was submitted to DOE in mid-October. On January 15th, DOE “Partially and Conditionally” awarded EPO funding for the HER program. EPO continues to develop an RFP to select the HER program implementer.

Industrial Energy Assessment Program (SEP-BIL funded): An RFP for an industrial energy assessment program contractor was issued by EPO in April and closed in May 2024. A Purchase Order was issued to the Cadmus Group LLC (Cadmus) on September 3, 2024. Bi-weekly calls are held with Cadmus tracking project status. Cadmus will be developing an application process for manufacturing facilities, marketing the program statewide, conducting Level II ASHRAE energy audits of selected facilities, conducting follow-up surveys at facilities to gauge energy efficiency project implementation, and developing success stories for EPO. Cadmus’ partners include Energy Infrastructure Partners LLC, Lehigh University Industrial Assessment Center (IAC), the Pennsylvania State University’s Mid-Atlantic/New Jersey On-Site Technical Assistance Partnership, and InClima. The goal of the program is to provide reduced cost energy audits for up to 200 small to mid-sized manufacturers. The program launched February 11th, and the application may be accessed at www.industrialenergyauditspa.com. *Five applications have been received, with on-site audits being completed at two facilities. The cost share is being waived for the first 20 facilities.*

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Energy Update

- **Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)-Home Energy Rebates** See Energy Efficiency section above for more information on Home Energy Rebates.
- **Training for Residential Energy Contractors (TREC) Formula Grant:** On November 21st, PA was awarded \$4,960,910 for its TREC program. On December 11th, DOE and EPO held a kickoff call for the formula TREC program, during which reporting requirements, invoice processing, award monitoring, as well as special terms and conditions, were explained. PA TREC will consist of a heat pump training program for HVAC contractors in PA in order to prepare them for successfully delivering Home Energy Rebates. The ALRD was released by DOE on July 17, 2023. EPO submitted its application several days in advance of the original DOE deadline of January 31, 2024. *On March 6th, EPO issued an RFP for a contractor to lead and manage the PA TREC program. Bids are due back by April 4th.*
- **Training for Residential Energy Contractors (TREC) Competitive Grant:** To support the implementation of the Home Energy Rebates programs, EPO submitted a \$4.6 million application package on January 14th to support a program to enhance and expand HVAC/R training options available through community and technical colleges in Pennsylvania, and help HVAC/R trainees achieve professional certification and attain high-quality employment. EPO has partnered with four colleges on this application—the Clean Energy Center at Pennsylvania College of Technology (CEC), Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC), Lehigh-Carbon Community College (LCCC), and Westmoreland County Community College (WCCC). CEC’s innovative approach to expand train-the-trainer offerings will enable up to 120 additional instructors at other HVAC/R training programs to receive updated training and heat pump curriculum, and up to 40 institutions to receive additional

HVAC/R training software to be used in their classrooms. If awarded, EPO will hire a contracted Program Administrator to disburse participant support costs and facilitate job placement for trainees. Award announcements are expected in the second quarter of 2025. Award announcements are expected in the second quarter of 2025.

- **Solar for All:** The Solar for All program is providing grants to States, Tribal governments, municipalities, and nonprofits to expand the number of low-income and disadvantaged communities that are primed for residential and community solar investment (\$7 billion nationally). DEP/PEDA was among the 60 awardees announced on April 22, 2024, receiving \$156,120,000 to develop a low-income solar program across PA. PEDA's Solar for All application was submitted in coalition with the Philadelphia Green Capital Corporation (PGCC), the non-profit green bank affiliate of the Philadelphia Energy Authority. The program aims to take the experience and success of the Solarize Philly program and expand that across the state. The PA Solar for All program seeks to enable solar installations for 12,000 homeowners over a 5-year program period.

PEDA is working with PGCC and PFM consultants to plan the initial phase of the PA Solar for All program which will focus on single family homes in low income and disadvantaged communities. To enable installations in these areas, PEDA envisions launching a subsidized solar lease product across the state so homeowners can have access to an affordable monthly payment without upfront installation costs.

EPA formally approved PEDA's workplan on December 19th and issued an amended notice award.

PEDA continues to work to stay in compliance with EPA requirements and is currently developing a quality assurance project plan which will also require EPA review and approval. PEDA is also working on a program administrator Request for Proposal.

State legislative authorization is still required before any of the \$156M award can be spent. The timing of this authorization will be a determining factor for PEDA to move from this planning stage and into implementation.

- **Building Codes for Efficiency and Resilience** In 2023 US DOE notified EPO that the application for "Maximizing Workforce for Energy Efficient Buildings and Building Construction in Pennsylvania" was selected for \$3 million in funding. The project is designed to provide professional development, lesson plans and curriculum and energy code compliance tools such as blower door tests to instructors at career and technical high schools across the state, sponsor certification tests for students in appropriate programs over the next three years. In addition, the project will fund program mapping for career and technical high schools and colleges to assist students in identifying clean energy career pathways that may lead to building code careers and the project will conduct a business case analysis for a building code official associate degree program. DOE also notified Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnership (NEEP) that the joint project in Pennsylvania and Delaware to conduct an energy code compliance study will be funded \$2 million to conduct the study and provide any needed professional development as determined by the study. NEEP's project has struggled to hire assessors, underscoring the shortage of trained building energy code workforce members. Both projects began work in January 2024. EPO's partner on the workforce project, the Clean Energy Center, has a parallel Weatherization Assistance Program project underway, so pilot school training for Building Science Principles (BSP) is underway with over 20 instructors trained in October and November. *Work to begin by April 1 for 10 additional BSP instructor training sessions and up to 10 HVAC instructors and their classes in Infiltration and Duct Leakage Certification.* RFQs will be released for technical college work and career mapping for work to get underway in 2025.
- **The Pennsylvania Grid Resilience Grants (PA GRG) Program:** In September, The Department of Environmental Protection was awarded \$7,889,926 from the U.S. Department of Environmental Protection to execute round two of PA GRG. EPO staff are currently drafting program documents for the second program year.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) awarded more than \$15 million in grants to electric distribution companies to improve electric grid reliability and resilience through the 2024 Pennsylvania Grid Resilience Grants (PA GRG) funding. Over 57,000 Pennsylvanians in 18 mainly rural counties will experience significant improvements in their electric grid resilience and reliability through the projects selected to receive the first-round of awards. The work will be accomplished by energy sector job types including electronic and general technicians, systems and electrical engineers, linemen, journeymen, apprentices, etc. This first round of projects will result in:

- 20 substations receiving upgraded equipment and 16 receiving added smart grid sensors/monitors to add weatherization, capacity, and flexibility. Communities will also receive elevated equipment, underground cables, automation technologies, and added physical protections that will prevent outages.
- Over 200 pieces of cutting-edge smart grid equipment will be installed, providing protection and control via enhanced system monitoring to detect power outages, locate and isolate them to speed system restoration. These grid enhancements will reduce outage time in some areas from hours to seconds.
- Over 8,000 power line poles will be inspected and almost 3,000 miles of vegetation will be cleared to lessen the impacts of storms fueled by climate change.

The PA GRG Program is funded under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Grid Resilience State/Tribal Formula Grant Program.

○ **Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) - Planning**

The Energy Programs Office (EPO) has scheduled public engagement sessions for gathering input on the CRPG Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) for Pennsylvania. Eight in-person and one virtual Community Climate Conversation Workshops have been scheduled. Members of the public can register for these workshops [here](#). *Workshops were held on:*

Eastern Pennsylvania In-Person Meetings (6–8 PM)

- **Wysox:** Monday, March 17
- **Hazleton:** Tuesday, March 18
- **Chester:** Wednesday, March 19
- **Lancaster:** Thursday, March 20

Western Pennsylvania In-Person Meetings (6–8 PM)

- **Erie:** Monday, March 24
- **Clarion:** Tuesday, March 25
- **Johnstown:** Wednesday, March 26
- **Uniontown:** Thursday, March 27

In addition to community engagement meetings, webinars will be held to engage local governments and stakeholders from targeted sectors including the Industrial Sector, Transportation Sector, Utilities and Power Sector, and Labor. Webinar dates and registration information is below:

Sector Webinars:

- **Thursday, 3/13** | 12:00 - 1:30 PM – Industrial Sector
<https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/06557fe9-0e78-4049-b89f-44afc6a39d25@418e2841-0128-4dd5-9b6c-47fc5a9a1bde>

- **Monday, 3/31** | 12:00 - 1:30 PM – Transportation Sector
<https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/a01ce725-da1b-4334-b9e2-b098249dde78@418e2841-0128-4dd5-9b6c-47fc5a9a1bde>
- **Tuesday, 4/1** | 12:00 - 1:30 PM – Utilities and Power Sector
<https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/8b2e9ed7-2818-446e-bf87-6dffb1c53121@418e2841-0128-4dd5-9b6c-47fc5a9a1bde>
- **Monday, 4/14** | 12:00 - 1:30 PM – Labor <https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/e6ce3d3b-9d90-4c1e-941f-d76ec4dbfe73@418e2841-0128-4dd5-9b6c-47fc5a9a1bde>

Local Government Webinars:

- **Thursday, 4/3** | 6:00 - 7:30 PM <https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/e5e8abc1-f33d-4805-8918-2aa68e215f2b@418e2841-0128-4dd5-9b6c-47fc5a9a1bde>
- **Monday, 4/7** | 12:00 - 1:30 PM <https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/1e118590-f132-475c-b079-d774598a610c@418e2841-0128-4dd5-9b6c-47fc5a9a1bde>

Inquiries about Pennsylvania’s Climate Action Planning and outreach can be submitted to ra-epclimate@pa.gov

○ **Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) - Implementation**

DEP is now accepting applications for medium- and large-scale decarbonization projects at industrial facilities through 11:59 pm on August 29, 2025. The application can be found on DEP’s [RISE PA webpage](#). PennTAP will begin accepting applications for small-scale projects in Q2 of 2025.

RISE PA is funded by a \$396M award from EPA under the CPRG Implementation Grants. The goal of RISE PA is to offer grants for small-, medium-, and large-scale decarbonization projects to reduce greenhouse gas and co-pollutant emissions at industrial facilities. Eligible project types include the following: energy efficiency; electrification; process emissions reduction technologies; fuel-switching; on-site renewable energy generation; carbon capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS), and fugitive emissions reductions technologies.

- **Energy Auditor Training Grant (EAT):** PA has been awarded a \$1,786,391 grant under DOE's Energy Auditor Training (EAT) grant to provide residential energy auditor training. Training will be provided to 150 individuals. Trainees will be able to sit for the Building Performance Institute Home Energy Professional Energy Auditor (HEP EA) certification exam. EPO submitted required documentation to DOE in January and are waiting for DOE to commence contract negotiations. The original projected contract issuance timeframe is July 2025.

Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice Executive Order

Former Governor Wolf signed an Environmental Justice Executive Order 2021-07 in October 2021 making permanent the Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ), Environmental Justice Advisory Board (EJAB) and creating the Environmental Justice Interagency Council (EJIC). Under the terms of the Executive Order, DEP is required to develop an agency EJ Strategic Plan, revise the EJ Policy regularly, and create EJ mapping tools.

Environmental Justice Planning

DEP has adopted the Interim-Final Policy, built from years of public engagement on this topic. DEP’s OEJ took comments and concerns about the current Environmental Justice Public Participation Policy, which DEP had in place since 2004. The updated policy incorporates comments of a previous revision effort from 2017, and an extensive outreach on the draft policy received in 2022. OEJ hosted 12 public meetings between September and November of 2023 and received over 740 public comments over the course of the process. DEP is also updating

where the policy applies. The PennEnviroScreen tool is a publicly available, state of the art mapping tool, built on proven national models, that will allow DEP to more accurately identify communities facing environmental justice issues.

Public Meetings

February 12, 2025

- *NEPA PAC's House Jubilee: Maria Ocasio (Northeast Regional Coordinator) and Jordi Comas (Northcentral Regional Coordinator) presented on the EPA/DEP Government-to-Government grant, highlighting its role in funding community-based environmental justice initiatives.*

February 19, 2025

- *DS Trevino attended the monthly ECOS EJ Workgroup meeting, contributing to national environmental justice discussions and regulatory coordination efforts.*

February 26, 2025

- *"New Voices in Environmental Justice" presentation led by Kim Dong Yoon (Special Projects Coordinator) as part of the EPA's Government-to-Government grant. This session, in partnership with PICC, aimed to equip communities with tools to address environmental challenges.*

March 5, 2025

- *DS Trevino met with PUC Vice Chair Kimberly Barrow to explore opportunities for improved collaboration between the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) and OEJ. The discussion focused on regulatory alignment, strengthening environmental justice initiatives, and enhancing support for underserved communities.*

March 7, 2025

- *Alianza Latina Women's History Month Roundtable: Ariana Genna (Southcentral Regional Coordinator) participated as a speaker, addressing environmental justice challenges faced by women and marginalized communities.*

March 10, 2025

- *Amani Reid (Southeast Regional Coordinator) joined Philatinos Radio for an interview discussing the impact of the EPA's Government-to-Government grant. The conversation highlighted past successes, ongoing projects, and future opportunities for community-government partnerships.*

Environmental Justice Interagency Council (EJIC)

The Environmental Justice Interagency Council (EJIC) convened on Thursday, February 13, 2025. The next EJIC meeting is scheduled to take place remotely on Thursday, May 22, 2025, at 9:00 AM. Additionally, the EJ Training Working Group has been established, comprising 17 dedicated participants. The goal for this working group is to establish the first phase of Environmental Justice (EJ) integration by educating Pennsylvania state agencies on EJ principles in alignment with Executive Order 2021-07.

Environmental Justice Advisory Board (EJAB)

EJAB convened on Thursday February 6, 2025. The next EJAB meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 13 at 10 AM at the Rachel Carson State Office Building. EJAB is forming a working group to enhance PennEnviroScreen, improving data accuracy and mapping capabilities to better assess environmental justice areas. Additionally, EJAB will develop a methodology to evaluate the efficacy of Enhanced Public Participation, shifting from input-based metrics to measuring actual outcomes. EJAB will also have a dedicated section in the Environmental Justice Newsletter to share updates on its initiatives and community engagement efforts.

Proactive Community Engagement

OEJ engaged and visited 53 out of 67 counties and priority municipalities with high EJ area densities in 2024. The Permitting Update shows a total of 36 permits issued in Environmental Justice (EJ) areas, with one Enhanced Public Participation (EPP) process initiated in the Northcentral region. The Southwest region had the

highest number of permits (18), while other regions had fewer. Notably, there have been no Opt-In requests submitted to date.

Permitting Update	Permits in EJ Areas	Enhanced Public Participation
Southcentral	6	0
Southeast	4	0
Northeast	4	0
Northcentral	1	1
Southwest	18	0
Northwest	3	0
Total	36	1

EPP Public Hearings

February 18, 2025

- *Public hearing for Energy Transfer Marketing and Terminal (ETMT) in Marcus Hook, hosted by Amani Reid (Southeast Regional Coordinator), regarding the renewal of Title V Operating Permit No. 23-00119 for ETMT's Marcus Hook Terminal facility located in an EJ area.*
- *A previous public hearing for the same site was held on November 12, 2024.*

Government 2 Government Grant Cohort

The EPA's Environmental Justice Government-to-Government grant program provides funding at the state, local, territorial, and tribal level to support government activities that lead to measurable environmental or public health impacts in communities disproportionately burdened by environmental harms. DEP was awarded \$600,000 in 2024. The funding will go to 12 community organizations across Pennsylvania through the Pennsylvania Engaging New Voices on Environmental Justice program. The 12 organizations will implement proactive community engagement models. OEJ and the organizations co-hosted an initial DEP training and meeting.

Beaver County Mitigation Fund

The Beaver County Environmental Mitigation Community Fund (BCEMCF) has been finalized. BCEMCF Advisory Board reviewed 93 applications (totaling \$20,362,948.03) and recommended 21 projects, totaling \$4,755,353.60 for funding. All funds have been disbursed, and project implementation is ongoing.

Brownfields Technical Assistance Grant

EPA has awarded DEP a Small Communities Assistance pilot grant for the past three years to assist a small, disadvantaged community on providing training, research and technical assistance for addressing brownfields redevelopment. DEP was awarded the Small Communities Assistance grant again for the 2022 fiscal year and is working with Oil City in Northwest Pennsylvania. The Oil City report was finalized, and the project concluded in June 2022. OEJ assisted in getting application support materials for the 2023 fiscal year applicant, Mahanoy City Borough in Schuylkill County. This program is set to receive an infusion of funding that may allow it to work with more and different types of communities but will keep a focus on communities facing EJ issues. OEJ has joined DEP's Brownfields staff to help introduce this project to municipalities facing EJ issues.

Alternative Fuel Vehicle Rebate Information Sheet

OEJ worked with the Energy Programs Office (EPO) and Office of Communications to develop a sheet that highlights the available resources that can make an electric or plug-in hybrid vehicle purchase more affordable. In particular, the sheet was developed to address the lack of awareness around the rebate's applicability to the purchase of a one-time pre-owned vehicles, and the availability of additional funds for low-income households. In addition, the sheet describes available federal and electric distribution company incentives. The Alternative

Fuel Vehicle Rebate guidelines have been recently revamped to add income caps to aid low to moderate income families in purchasing alternative fuel vehicles. OEJ is working with EPO on a revamp of the sheet, it will soon be found on the EPO webpage.

Grants

OEJ is working with DEP's Grants Center and individual programs to track grant participation in EJ Areas and incorporate EJ consideration into program area grants. OEJ is supporting the Grants Office and other offices in developing outreach materials about the DEP grantmaking process. OEJ is also participating in an interagency group assessing overarching principles for advancing equity in Commonwealth grantmaking. OEJ assisted the 902 Recycling Grant Program made available for municipalities by adding instructions on how to use the PennEnviroScreen tool to identify EJ areas as potential applicants answer EJ related questions. OEJ is supporting the EPO in outreach to priority communities for their MORE Grant Program. OEJ also assisted the Environmental Education Grants outreach and assisted the program on its EJ considerations.

Outreach on Key DEP Initiatives

OEJ is working with the Policy Office regarding inclusion and evaluation of equity and EJ considerations in the development of the 2021 Pennsylvania Climate Action Plan. OEJ is working with EPO and community partners on outreach and engagement for the Pennsylvania Climate Action Plan 2024, through the Climate Action for Environmental Justice Communities Program and events.

Oil and Gas

Oil and Gas Rulemakings

Proposed Environmental Protection Performance Standards for Conventional Oil and Gas Operators Rulemaking

In 2016, the General Assembly passed Act 52, which abrogated the ongoing rulemaking process regarding conventional oil and gas wells and established the Pennsylvania Grade Crude Oil Development Advisory Council (CDAC). Act 52 directed DEP to work with CDAC to “examine and make recommendations regarding existing technical regulations promulgated under 58 Pa.C.S. (relating to oil and gas) ... that impact the conventional oil and gas industry of this Commonwealth and explore the development of a regulatory scheme that provides for environmental oversight and enforcement specifically applicable to the conventional oil and gas industry.” From 2016 to the present, the Office of Oil and Gas Management (OOGM) has worked with CDAC to develop potential legislation and proposed regulations relating to conventional oil and gas wells.

Because discussions did not result in viable legislation, DEP proceeded with the development of a draft proposed conventional oil and gas rulemaking and advanced the regulatory concepts via two rulemaking packages during 2020. The first rulemaking relates primarily to the proper management of waste generated at conventional oil and gas well sites; the second rulemaking addresses other critical environmental protection performance standards at such sites.

On August 6, 2020, the OOGM first presented these two draft proposed rulemakings to CDAC. On September 17, 2020, DEP also informed the Oil and Gas Technical Advisory Board (TAB) of discussions with CDAC regarding the draft proposed rulemakings and shared copies of both draft proposed rulemakings. During a series of meetings from December 3, 2020, through September 9, 2021, OOGM staff, CDAC, and TAB continued to discuss and review the draft proposed rulemakings. At its regularly scheduled meeting on December 16, 2021, OOGM staff shared the final version of the Environmental Protection Performance Standards for Conventional Oil and Gas Operators draft proposed Annex with CDAC members. This provided CDAC with an opportunity to adopt written comments to the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) in accordance with section 5 of Act 52 of 2016 (58 P.S. § 1205). The CDAC Regulatory Subcommittee prepared formal comments in February 2022 and March 2022 and presented them to the full council on April 21,

2022. CDAC voted to accept the comments and will submit them to DEP to accompany the rulemaking when it is submitted to the EQB.

The Department discussed the Chapter 78 proposed Waste Management rulemaking with CDAC at the first meeting of 2023 on February 16 that was conducted at Pennsylvania Western University, Clarion. The Chapter 78 proposed Waste Management rulemaking was also discussed at the CDAC meeting on Thursday, May 25, 2023. This rulemaking package will continue to be advanced by the Department through the CDAC and the remaining steps of the regulatory development process.

Well Plugging

Governor Shapiro Announces 300th Well Plugged – On March 12, Governor Shapiro hosted a press event in North Franklin Township, Washington County to announce the 300th abandoned well that was plugged in Pennsylvania since the beginning of this Administration. The well is situated between two reservoirs and was leaking methane.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Initial Grant

The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) approved the application as submitted for the full \$25 million Initial Grant on August 25, 2022, with an effective “date of receipt” of October 1, 2022. The Department allocated \$2.5 million to cover administrative costs associated with administering the Initial Grant as authorized in the federal grant agreement. Based on DEP’s application, all Initial Grant funding will be used for well plugging contracts or administrative costs.

DEP expects to plug a total of 221 orphan and abandoned wells using \$22.5 million of the Initial Grant funding via two grant rounds. During the first round, DEP published five separate Invitations to Bid in the commonwealth’s electronic bid solicitation tool called “Bid Express” (www.bidexpress.com). The second round included eight additional Invitation to Bid Packages. As of March 17, 2025, the Department has plugged all 81 orphan and abandoned wells in Round 1 and 139 of 140 orphan and abandoned wells in Round 2. The Department has plugged a total of 220 wells *and the final well is expected to be plugged in the second quarter of 2025.*

IIJA Phase 1 Formula Grant

On August 19, 2024, the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) issued a Notice of Award for the Phase 1 Formula Grant to DEP. The grant provides the Department an additional \$76,406,474 to plug, locate, and remediate orphan and abandoned wells. The period of performance is September 1, 2024 through August 31, 2029.

IIJA Phase 1 Formula Grant orphan well plugging projects have been significantly delayed due to extensive federal review requirements and lengthy approval processes at the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI). On December 31, 2024, after four months of back-and-forth and four significant submissions to DOI, DEP was informed that an important project involving a contract to plug 12 orphan wells in McKean County was approved. This represents only the third project in the nation to be approved by DOI. The Department also had a similar experience for another project in Jefferson County to plug 19 wells via contract which was given final approval on January 21, 2025. Pennsylvania now has two projects authorized by DOI under the IIJA Phase 1 Formula Grant, both of which *were* routed to post to Bid Express, the Commonwealth’s platform for soliciting bids for contracting. The Department has *expended* considerable time and resources to reach consensus with DOI as the Environmental Information Documentation (EID) requirements for these IIJA-funded projects is quite burdensome. The EID includes information concerning various environmental standards, as well as documentation related to the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

The federal Executive Order is another matter that complicated these efforts and adds uncertainty for the Commonwealth. *On Friday, March 7, DEP met via Teams with the DOI federal award officer to discuss the status of this reimbursement request and what actions can be taken to speed the review and approval of this and future reimbursement requests. DEP continues to maintain open discussions with DOI.*

DEP published a bid solicitation on February 12 announcing the availability of a “multiservice” Request for Proposal. This RFP will seek services for Engineering Services – Surface Permitting and Control, Well Site Investigation and Remediation Services, Methane Emissions Monitoring and Quantification Services, Well Location Services, Historical and Archaeological Services, Ecological Services. The RFP deadline is April 14, 2025.

Orphan Well Plugging Grant Program

Act 96/Act 136 of 2022 requires DEP to establish the Orphan Oil and Gas Well Plugging Grant program and direct at least 20% of any funds awarded to Pennsylvania under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) to the Orphan Well Plugging Grant Program (OWPGP). The Department successfully launched the opening of the OWPGP on October 9, 2024.

To date, 32 applications have been received, of which 30 have been conditionally approved (1 withdrawn and 1 denied since the well to be plugged was not an orphan well as required by Act 96/Act 136). The applications represent 148 wells to be plugged, of which 29 have detectable levels of methane. To date, \$11,760,000 has been committed to these projects, provided all projects are approved by the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI).

To date, none of the applicants have been approved by DOI’s Interior Business Center (IBC), despite numerous attempts by DEP to satisfy the IBC’s subrecipient requirements. Before IBC will begin to approve subrecipients, the budget accounting sheet template must be approved by IBC. *On Friday, March 7, DEP met via Teams with the DOI federal award officer to discuss the status of DOI’s review and what actions can be taken to speed the review and approval of these applications. DEP continues to maintain open discussions with DOI.*

IIJA Phase 2 Formula Grant Guidance

On August 14, 2024, the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) released final Phase 2 Formula Grant guidance. This guidance allows states to request up to 50% of their remaining available IIJA Formula Grant funding, approximately \$114 million in Pennsylvania’s case. The Department submitted the grant application on December 12, 2024, and is awaiting approval from DOI. DOI has not given Pennsylvania any indication relating to their review of the application and the federal Executive Order adds uncertainty to this process.

Methane Emissions Reduction Program 1 (MERP1):

On May 14, 2024, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) informed DEP that it is prepared to award a \$44,457,220 MERP grant to the Department. This project will reduce methane emissions from marginal conventional wells (MCWs) by assisting well owners to voluntarily and permanently plug these wells and measure methane emissions from MCWs both pre- and post-plugging operations. The period of performance is December 1, 2023 through September 30, 2028.

The Department has developed two new grant programs including the MERP “Small Operator Assistance Grant” and “General Assistance Grant.” The “MERP Small Operator Assistance Grant” is available to operators with 10 or fewer wells. Many such operators are “home use” well operators who may not have the necessary funds to properly maintain or plug these wells. The “MERP General Assistance Grant” is designed for operators with 11 or more wells. Eligible applicants include operators, qualified well pluggers, or third parties.

MERP grant awards are available on a competitive basis to plug “Marginal Conventional Wells” (MCWs). An MCW is defined as a conventional well that produces less than 90 thousand cubic feet of gas per day or 15

barrels of oil per day on average. Applications will be prioritized based on well scoring criteria to maximize the goals and initiatives of the program, including methane emission reduction and environmental justice.

The Office of Oil and Gas Management opened these two well plugging grant programs simultaneously starting on Wednesday, October 16, 2024 and they closed on December 16, 2024.

As of *March 17, 2025*, DEP received 40 grant applications from conventional oil and gas operators to plug a total of 393 marginal conventional wells, of which 153 have detectable levels of methane.

The Department is currently prioritizing the wells to be plugged. Thus far, \$9,205,000 has been committed to these projects. DEP is doing everything possible to continue moving the MERP grant program forward until DOE is able to provide clarity. On January 28, 2025, the DEP received a memorandum from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) stating that DEP is to cease any activities under its DOE grant and a federal Grant Officer will contact DEP regarding next steps.

U.S. Department of Interior Released Grant Guidance for Regulatory Improvement Grant

On January 15, 2025, the U.S. Department of Interior released [final guidance](#) on how states can apply for up to \$40 million each in Regulatory Improvement Grant funding. States are eligible for two types of Regulatory Improvement Grants under today's announcement:

- **Plugging Standards Grants:** Intended to incentivize states to implement standards and procedures designed to ensure that wells located in the state are plugged in an effective manner that protects groundwater and other natural resources, public health and safety, and the environment.
- **Program Improvement Grants:** Intended to incentivize states to implement other improvements to state programs designed to reduce future orphaned well burdens, such as financial assurance reform, alternative funding mechanisms for orphaned well programs, and reforms to programs relating to well transfer or temporary abandonment.

Under the [final guidance](#), states are eligible to receive a Plugging Standards Regulatory Improvement Grant of \$20 million, and a Program Improvement Regulatory Improvement Grant of \$20 million, for a total of \$40 million per state. By incentivizing states to improve their standards, procedures and orphaned well programs, these grants will help better protect the environment and help prevent the creation of new orphaned wells.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), UIC Class VI Well Grant Program

Section 40306 of Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) appropriated \$50 million to assist states, territories, and tribes in developing or revising their UIC programs for primacy over the next five years. Class VI wells are used for carbon capture and underground storage and enable the capture of carbon dioxide. Pennsylvania submitted a Letter of Intent to participate in the grant program on March 15, 2023. The Grant Implementation Document issued in November 2023 by the EPA indicated that Pennsylvania's share is \$1,930,000. However, the amount may increase to \$2,097,826 if other states choose to opt out. The technical and regulatory services section of the Bureau of Oil and Gas Planning and Program Management (BOGPPM) prepared a work plan and budget to apply for the UIC Class VI Wells Grant Program. The work plan lays out activities to be undertaken in support of primacy over the next five years and was submitted to the EPA on September 9, 2024. The EPA is currently reviewing the application.

Waste Management

Food Recovery Infrastructure Grant – Open Solicitation

Applications for the third solicitation of the Food Recovery Infrastructure Grant (FRIG) were due February 28. One-hundred twenty-three (123) non-profit organizations submitted applications by the deadline, requesting a total of approximately \$4.5 million. Applications received by the deadline will be reviewed for completeness and eligibility. This funding is available to registered section 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations operating programs in Pennsylvania that partner with food retailers, wholesalers, agriculture organizations, farms and cooperatives, grocery stores, etc. to recover safe and wholesome foods before they unnecessarily become a waste. The foods are then made available to the public through the nonprofit organization. The intent of this program is to reduce, to the greatest extent practicable, the amount of fresh and processed foodstuffs currently entering Pennsylvania's waste stream. Equipment eligible for funding for reimbursement under this program assists these nonprofit organizations with the storage, transportation, or preparation of the recovered safe and wholesome foods, such as refrigerators, freezers, refrigerant and non-refrigerant vehicles, cargo vans, pallet jacks, dollies, hand trucks, forklifts, stoves, ovens, microwaves, and shipping and installation costs for the eligible equipment. The maximum grant award the nonprofit organization can request or receive per application cannot exceed \$50,000. Special consideration will be given to those applicants identified in Environmental Justice Areas.

Act 101, Section 901 Household Battery Education Grant

The Bureau of Waste Management (BWM) began accepting grant applications on January 24 for educational campaigns on the proper management of household batteries authorized under the Act 101, Section 901 grant program. Due to the emerging fire risk posed by improperly managed end-of-life consumer lithium batteries, BWM is developing a scope of work within the Section 901 grant program to target this focus material. The grant will provide a maximum award amount of \$75,000 to cover county educational costs for battery safe handling, collection and awareness campaigns aimed at increasing the proper collection of lithium battery waste and decreasing the occurrence of lithium battery related fires in Pennsylvania's critical waste and recycling infrastructure.

Act 101, Section 903 County Recycling Coordinator Grant

BWM began accepting grant applications on February 22 for the Act 101, Section 903 County Recycling Coordinator Grant. This grant provides a 50% reimbursement for County Recycling Coordinators' salary and expenses. This grant is only available to Pennsylvania county governments. The deadline to apply is April 30 by 11:59 p.m. All applications must be submitted through the Commonwealth's Single Electronic Application for Assistance website.

Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)

The regular SWAC meeting *was* held on March 27. *The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 12.* More information is available on the [SWAC website](#).

Recycling Fund Advisory Committee (RFAC)

A special RFAC meeting *was* called on March 27, to be held jointly with SWAC. The purpose of the special meeting *was for* the Committee *to* discuss and act on the Department's proposed changes to the commercial incentive award formula for Act 101, Section 904 Recycling Performance Grants. *The annual RFAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 25.* Additional information is available on the [SWAC website](#).

Environmental Cleanup and Brownfields

Environmental Cleanup and Brownfields Rulemakings

Proposed Rulemaking: Administration of Land Recycling Program - Chapter 250 Update

DEP has prepared a proposed rulemaking to address Statewide health standard medium-specific concentrations (MSCs) including the soil lead values and Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs). At the June 30, 2022, and August 11, 2022, Cleanup Standards Scientific Advisory Board (CSSAB) meetings, the lead and PAH workgroups presented their conclusions and recommendations to DEP on the issues of lead and PAH

toxicity. The PAH workgroup recommended that DEP use the 1993 relative potency factors from EPA that were referenced in the development of the benzo[a]pyrene Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) toxicological values. The lead workgroup recommended that DEP adopt 5 µg/dL as the target blood lead level for the calculation of the soil direct contact values and also recommended that DEP allow for the use of averaging attainment data for the demonstration of attainment of the lead direct contact statewide health standard. DEP presented the draft proposed regulation to the CSSAB on October 20, 2022, January 23, 2023, and May 31, 2023. EQB voted to adopt the proposal in the March 12, 2024, meeting. The proposed rulemaking was published in the July 13, 2024, edition of the PA Bulletin for a 60-day public comment period, which ended on September 11, 2024. In-person public hearings were held on August 19, 2024, at DEP’s Southwest Regional Office and on August 27, 2024, at DEP’s Southeast Regional Office. A virtual hearing was held on September 4, 2024, via Microsoft Teams. DEP received no public comments on the rulemaking from either the August 27 or September 4 public hearing. Comments received from the public comment period are currently being assessed.

Cleanup Standards Scientific Advisory Board (CSSAB)

The CSSAB held a meeting on October 30, 2024, where DEP provided final updates to the Technical Guidance Manual (TGM) Sections II, III, and IV. DEP also provided a response to the board’s comments on the TGM Sections II, III, and IV. DEP also provided a proposed rulemaking for Chromium (VI) and presented a draft guidance for Addressing the Historical Application of Lead and Arsenic Pesticides. Information about the meetings can be found through the Public Participation tab on the DEP web site at www.dep.pa.gov (select “Public Participation,” then “Advisory Committees,” then “Cleanup and Brownfields Advisory Committees,” then “Cleanup Standards Scientific Advisory Board”). The next CSSAB meeting is scheduled for April 23, 2025.

Storage Tank Advisory Committee (STAC)

The Storage Tank Advisory Committee (STAC) met on December 4, 2024. Randy Martin, Chief, Division of Storage Tanks, reviewed the STAC membership list and indicated that all 16 positions are currently filled. Benjamin Lorah, Director, Bureau of Special Funds, Department of Insurance, provided an update regarding the Underground Storage Tank Indemnification Fund. Alex Eckman provided an update on various program statistics, compliance rates, and proposed future activities to increase compliance rates. DEP staff provided updates to the Closure Requirements for Underground Storage Tank Systems Technical Guidance Document Number 263-4500-601, Closure Requirements for Aboveground Storage Tank Systems Technical Guidance Document Number 263-4200-001 and to the Closure Report Forms associated with the two Technical Guidance Documents. DEP staff informed the committee that all documents have been recently finalized and are now published. Alex Eckman provided the committee with updates regarding newly regulated aboveground storage tanks containing perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) and their salts and structural isomers. These storage tanks became regulated by DEP when amendments to the list of hazardous substances under the Federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) became effective on July 8, 2024. Ross Jarvis, Square Robot, provided a presentation on in-Service robotic tank inspections to the committee and Alex Eckman provided the DEP’s current position on robotic tank inspections. The STAC meeting scheduled for March 5, 2025, was cancelled. The next STAC meeting is scheduled for June 4, 2025.

Radiation Protection

Radiation Protection Advisory Committee

The next Radiation Protection Advisory Committee (RPAC) meeting will be held on April 30, 2025. Participants will be able to join in-person or remotely. The meeting will be held at the Rachel Carson State Office Building, Room 105, at 9:00 a.m. RPAC will discuss the Bureau’s program review, the addition of future fusion reactor regulations, radioactive materials (RAM) regulations corrections from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and the review of regulations for RAM to be included in the next regulation update.

Final Omitted Rulemaking: US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Consistency Rule – Incorporation by Reference

This final-omitted rulemaking will amend Chapters 215, 217, 219, 220, and 230 to remove references to sections of Title 10 Chapter I (relating to NRC) of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) that cannot be incorporated by reference. The Bureau of Radiation Protection (BRP) incorporates by reference selected NRC regulations relating to radiation protection and control of radioactive materials from Title 10 of the CFR as part of DEP's Agreement State program. Likewise, the BRP does not incorporate by reference certain sections of Title 10 for which DEP does not have authority to implement. CFR sections that are incorporated by reference and those sections that are not incorporated by reference are specifically listed in Chapters 215, 217, 219, 220, and 230. The NRC recently reviewed DEP's regulations and noted several sections of Title 10 that should not be incorporated by reference.

DEP does not have the authority under the Agreement State program to implement these sections and has never enforced against any of these sections. This final-omitted rulemaking is needed to update these references to ensure that DEP's regulations meet the requirements of NRC's Agreement State program.

Low Level Waste (LLW) Forum Appointment

A letter to the Executive Director, Daniel Shrum, has been drafted to request Dwight Shearer, Bureau Director of Radiation Protection, to be the primary designee to represent Pennsylvania on the LLW Forum Committee.

Water Programs

Water Programs Rulemakings

Methylmercury Site-Specific Water Quality Criteria Rulemaking

This proposed rulemaking will recommend updates and revisions to § 93.8d which outlines the site-specific water quality criteria process. The proposed amendments include the addition of language that clarifies when site-specific water quality criteria may be requested and specifies the conditions under which site-specific water quality criteria may not be requested. The proposed amendments will update language throughout § 93.8d to identify the data and information that must be submitted with each request for a site-specific water quality criterion and the actions to be taken by the Department as part of the site-specific water quality criterion development and regulatory processes. These proposed amendments are consistent with federal regulations and requirements.

In addition, this proposed rulemaking proposes to delete the statewide total mercury water quality criterion of 0.05 µg/L for Ebaughs Creek located in York County; and to add a site-specific methylmercury water quality criterion of 0.00004 µg/L for Ebaughs Creek in § 93.9o (relating to Drainage List O). The York County Solid Waste Regional Authority (YCSWRA) owns and operates the York County Sanitary Landfill, which is a 306-acre site located in Hopewell Township, York County. Between 1974 and 1997, the landfill received municipal and industrial waste, which was placed into lined and unlined cells. The site contains approximately 135 acres of unlined landfill. Detection of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in several groundwater wells was discovered in 1983 and was associated with the unlined cells. A treatment system was installed to remove the VOCs and began operation in 1985. The system consisted of 17 extraction wells and air stripping towers. The air stripping towers discharge the treated groundwater under NPDES permit number PA0081744. Mercury was later identified through the Department's permit application review process as a potential pollutant of concern. YCSWRA has requested the Department delete the statewide total mercury water quality criterion of 0.05 µg/L for Ebaughs Creek and develop a site-specific methylmercury water quality criterion for Ebaughs Creek to inform their NPDES permit effluent limitations for Outfall 002. Since the Department does not currently have statewide numeric water quality criteria for methylmercury, YCSWRA's request satisfies § 93.8d(a)(3).

DEP presented the proposed rulemaking to the Agricultural Advisory Board and the Water Resources Advisory Committee on March 15, 2023, and March 16, 2023, respectively. The proposed rulemaking was presented to and approved by Environmental Quality Board on July 11, 2023. On August 21, 2023, a tolling memo was received from the Office of Attorney General. On September 13, 2023, DEP staff and counsel submitted a response to the Office of Attorney General's tolling memo. The proposed rulemaking was published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on November 4, 2023, which initiated a 45-day public comment period that closed on December 19, 2023. A public hearing was held on December 5, 2023. Public comments on the proposed rulemaking can be found on DEP's eComment website. A final rulemaking is anticipated in early 2025.

Triennial Review of Water Quality Standards

Water quality standards are in-stream water quality goals that are implemented by imposing specific regulatory requirements and permit conditions (such as treatment requirements, effluent limits, and best management practices) on individual sources of pollution. This proposed rulemaking fulfills the Commonwealth's obligation to periodically review and revise its water quality standards and updates Pennsylvania's water quality standards such that the surface waters of this Commonwealth are afforded the appropriate level of protection.

This rulemaking proposes to:

- Add or revise aquatic life and human health water quality criteria for 17 substances,
- Clarify duration periods for aquatic life criteria, and
- Reaffirm the removal of Water Contact Sports use from the Outer Erie Harbor/Presque Isle Bay and portions of the Delaware Estuary and removal of portions of the Warm Water Fishes (WWF) and Migratory Fishes (MF) aquatic life uses for portions of the Delaware Estuary.

DEP presented the proposed rulemaking to the Water Resources Advisory Committee and Agricultural Advisory Board on November 17, 2022, and December 8, 2022, respectively. The proposed rulemaking was presented to and approved by Environmental Quality Board on July 11, 2023. The proposed rulemaking was published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on October 7, 2023, opening the 45-day public comment period, which ended on November 21, 2023. A public hearing was held on November 14, 2023. The draft final rulemaking was presented to the Agricultural Advisory Board on April 17, 2024, *and the Water Resource Advisory Committee on May 16, 2024*. A final rulemaking is anticipated for early 2025.

Class A Stream Redesignations

Section 303(c)(1) of the Federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C.A. § 1313(c)) requires states to periodically review and revise, as necessary, water quality standards. The water quality standards evaluated in this rulemaking are the designated uses of surface waters. The regulatory changes in this proposed rulemaking are the result of stream evaluations conducted by the Department and they recommend redesignation for 96 streams. Stream evaluations were conducted in response to a submittal of data from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) under § 93.4c (relating to implementation of antidegradation requirements). In this proposed rulemaking, the stream redesignations rely on § 93.4b(a)(2)(ii) to qualify streams for High Quality Waters (HQ) designation based upon their classifications as Class A wild trout streams. A surface water that has been classified a Class A wild trout stream by the PFBC, based on species-specific biomass standards in 58 Pa. Code § 57.8a (relating to Class A wild trout streams), and following public notice and comment, qualifies for Department evaluation of the stream for HQ designation. The PFBC published notice and requested comments on the Class A classification of the streams listed in this proposed rulemaking. The PFBC Commissioners approved these waters after public notice and comment. The proposed rulemaking was adopted by the EQB on September 10, 2024, and was published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on February 1, 2025, opening a 45-day public comment period that closed March 18, 2025.

Notification Requirements for Unauthorized Discharges to Waters of the Commonwealth

This proposed rulemaking aims to provide addition clarity on which unauthorized discharges require immediate Department notification while continuing to enable the Department to meet its statutory duty to protect the waters of the Commonwealth. To accomplish this, the proposed amendments to 25 Pa. Code Chapter 91 incorporate [40 CFR 117.3](#) as a list of reportable quantities of specific substances designated as hazardous. Unauthorized discharges that are equal to or exceed the reportable quantities in 40 CFR 117.3 must be immediately reported to the Department under the proposed rulemaking. If the unauthorized discharge is less than the reportable quantities or involves substances not included on the list, the proposed rulemaking establishes factors that must be evaluated and documented in order to determine that an unauthorized discharge does not require immediate Department notification. However, the proposed amendments provide that a responsible person may simply report an unauthorized discharge and avoid the requirement to evaluate and document those factors. This rulemaking does not expand the set of unauthorized discharge incidents that require immediate Department notification.

The Department presented the draft proposed rulemaking to the Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) on September 21, 2023. WRAC members expressed concerns about the rulemaking. Following the initial presentation to WRAC, the Department made several revisions to the draft proposed rulemaking to address the members' concerns.

The Department presented the revised draft proposed rulemaking to the Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB) on October 19, 2023. AAB members expressed general support for the draft proposed rulemaking. The Department also presented the draft proposed rulemaking to the Public Water System Technical Assistance Center (PWS TAC) Board on October 26, 2023. The PWS TAC Board voted unanimously to support the draft proposed rulemaking moving forward.

The Department presented the revised draft proposed rulemaking to WRAC on May 16, 2024. WRAC voted unanimously to support the revised draft proposed rulemaking moving forward.

The EQB adopted the proposed rulemaking on November 12, 2025. The proposed rulemaking will be published in an upcoming issue of the Pennsylvania Bulletin for a 60-day public comment period.

General Permits for Beneficial Use of Sewage Sludge (aka Biosolids)

The Department issues general permits for the beneficial use of biosolids (aka sewage sludge) and residential septage. PAG-07 allows for the Beneficial Use of Exceptional Quality (EQ) Biosolids; PAG-08 allows for the Beneficial Use of Non-Exceptional Quality (Non-EQ) Biosolids; and PAG-09 allows for the Beneficial Use of Residential Septage. Beneficial use is the use or reuse of biosolids or residential septage for any purpose, where the use does not harm or threaten public health, safety, welfare, or the environment. These permits apply to a person who prepares biosolids that will be sold or given away in a bag or other container or biosolids that will be land-applied, and to a person who applies biosolids or residential septage to the land. The Department issues these permits under the authority of Pennsylvania's Solid Waste Management Act and the Clean Streams Law.

The Department has administratively extended these general permits for several years. The Department has presented pre-draft permits to the Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) and the Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB) in March 2021.

The Bureau of Clean Water has also organized a workgroup to gather input on the proposed changes to the general permits. The group includes biosolids generators, land applicers, farmers, consultants, and interested third parties (including the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and the Delaware Riverkeeper Network). The workgroup discussion focused on the biosolids land application program, the proposed changes to the permit, PFAS in biosolids, nutrient management of biosolids, impacts of hauled-in residual waste into the biosolids treatment process, and field storage of biosolids on land application sites. The workgroup members decided to provide formal written comments to the Department. DEP will use the information gathered during the outreach process to draft any revisions to the permit documents prior to issuing draft permits for public

comment.

The Department also communicated with and provided information to the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LBFC) as the LBFC evaluated the costs and practicality of the proposed changes to the general permits, as directed by [House Resolution 149 from the 2021-2022 General Assembly session](#). LBFC's [final report](#) on the proposed revisions to the general permits was published in June. DEP's response to LBFC's draft report is included in LBFC's final report as Appendix E. These permit revisions are on hold until EPA releases their PFAS risk analysis in biosolids which is anticipated to occur near the end of 2024. Since the existing permits expire November 30, 2024, the Department administratively extended the existing general permits through publication in the PA Bulletin Saturday, November 16, 2024.

On January 14, 2025, EPA Released its "Draft Risk Assessment to Advance Scientific Understanding of PFOA and PFOS in Biosolids." DEP is reviewing the [Draft Risk Assessment](#) and how it will impact the biosolids program in Pennsylvania.

Federal Infrastructure Funding - Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) provides funding to the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF). These programs have seen increases to base program funding as well as new supplemental funding programs.

The BIL reauthorizes the base DWSRF program funding and establishes new supplemental DWSRF pots for general infrastructure projects, emerging contaminants projects, and lead service line replacement projects. Base and general supplemental DWSRF money *is* used for projects that will improve water system infrastructure (e.g., replacing aging water lines, upgrading treatment plant components, finished water storage tanks). DWSRF BIL funding will provide funding to eligible water systems via PENNVEST for these infrastructure projects. Additionally, the BIL will provide money for technical assistance to water systems, as well as money to cover the cost of administration of the DWSRF program for both the Bureau of Safe Drinking Water (BSDW) and the Bureau of Clean Water (BCW).

BIL reauthorizes the base CWSRF program funding and also establishes new CWSRF supplemental funding for general infrastructure projects and emerging contaminants projects. In addition, it establishes a new set-aside that will enable DEP to provide technical assistance to small, rural Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTW). Similar to the DWSRF program, the CWSRF base program provides funding to infrastructure projects to improve non-point source pollution, stormwater infrastructure, and wastewater infrastructure. CWSRF funding will provide funding to eligible project applicants via PENNVEST for infrastructure projects. The BIL CWSRF funding will also support technical assistance to systems and includes a means to cover the cost of administration of the CWSRF program.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law also mandates that 49 percent of funds provided through the DWSRF General Supplemental Funding and the DWSRF Lead Service Line Replacement Funding must be provided as grants and forgivable loans to disadvantaged communities. The BIL also requires that at least 25 percent of funds provided through the DWSRF Emerging Contaminants Funding be provided as grants and forgivable loans to disadvantaged communities or public water systems serving fewer than 25,000 people.

DEP staff manage EPA applications for both the DWSRF and CWSRF capitalization grants awarded to PENNVEST. DEP staff also oversee DEP's role in managing potential and funded projects from pre-application through project closeout. DEP staff coordinate to prepare the SRF Intended Use Plans including budgets on an annual basis and review, ranking and management of PENNVEST project applications.

DEP and PENNVEST *are developing applications* for the coming federal fiscal year state allotments. The *State Revolving Fund Grants* are noncompetitive grants, so EPA provides the state allotment in advance of the application process to facilitate grant application development.

The BIL also provides funding programs that appear to fall outside of the SRF umbrella. *They are:*

- Assistance for Small and Disadvantaged Communities (Sec. 50104) – Preliminary EPA documents indicate that PA’s share may be ~\$28 million annually. Funding may be provided through Small, Underserved, and Disadvantaged Communities Grants (not SRF), and can be used to remediate PFAS in drinking water.
- Several Lead Programs – Reducing Lead in Drinking Water (Sec. 50105) and Lead Contamination in School Drinking Water (Sec. 50110). Note: These lead programs may be under the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Grant umbrella.
- Operational Sustainability Grants to Small PWSs (Sec. 50106) and Midsize and Large Drinking Water System Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Program (Sec. 50107).

For FFY 2024 PENNVEST has been awarded four DWSRF grants: Base, BIL – General Supplemental, BIL – Lead Service Line Replacement and BIL – Emerging Contaminants totaling \$294,925,800 including required state match. Similarly, for FFY 2024 PENNVEST has been awarded three CWSRF grants: Base, BIL – General Supplemental and BIL – Emerging Contaminants totaling \$155,403,000 including required state match. Similarly, BCW *was awarded* the FFY 2022 and FFY 2023 Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse (OSG) grant application totaling approximately \$3.9M in federal funds.

Chesapeake Bay Restoration IJA/BIL

On May 2, 2022, EPA announced the allocation of \$40 million in first-year funds from the IJA at an event in Baltimore. The funding includes the \$15 million allocation to jurisdictions for the Most Effective Basins (MEB) as well as funding through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s Small Watershed Grants (SWG) and Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reductions (INSR) grants program. To date, the IJA funding that would be directed through the SWG/INSR has not been awarded; EPA published a Request for Application (RFA) on July 31, 2023, with the intent to award the IJA funds for SWG/INSR administration in January 2024.

On March 13, 2023, EPA provided the Pennsylvania agency-specific allocations, beginning October 1, 2023. Including all Chesapeake Bay federal grants, DEP received more than \$13 million, of which more than \$5 million will be IJA money. DEP worked with EPA to review the draft grant guidelines and to identify procurement requirements associated with IJA funding. DEP reviewed the additional federal funding allocation with conservation districts during the annual Conservation District and Commonwealth Agency Agricultural meeting on April 6, 2023. DEP and SCC held two follow-up sessions on May 18, 2023, with county partners (Tier 1-2 and Tier 3-4, respectively) to review and discuss options for delivering the additional federal funding, complementing state funding sources, to the counties. The workplan, budget, and associated forms were submitted to EPA by the July 16, 2023, deadline. On August 30, 2023, DEP received our FY2023 IJA funding allocation.

The 2024 Community Clean Water Coordinator (CCWC) and CAP Implementation Block Grant round opened for counties to submit their project proposals on September 29, 2023, and closed on October 31, 2023. Funding for this block grant program comes from the Environmental Stewardship Fund / Growing Greener and the EPA Chesapeake Bay MEB IJA, Local Government Implementation, and Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant (CBIG) MEB grant funds. Changes to this year’s round included a requirement to submit the estimated nutrient and sediment reductions (in prior years this was voluntary) and a minimum threshold for funding of \$200,000. The reason for the mandatory submission of estimated nutrient and sediment reductions is due to requests from EPA to include these metrics in Pennsylvania’s 2024-2025 Chesapeake Bay Milestone Commitments. These adjustments also allow for counties to proactively plan ahead to meet their CAP nutrient and sediment reduction goals with the knowledge of the minimum amount of funding that would be allocated to their county, if requested. Staff reviewed the project proposals and allocation formulas and announced the awards on December 1, 2023.

EPA provided the FY2024 IJA allocation amount to DEP, SCC, and DCNR on February 8, 2024. EPA met with the three state agencies to discuss potential allocations. EPA will shift all of the Most Effective Basin annual allocation back to DEP through the Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant (CBIG) and then move some of DEP's IJA allocation to further support DCNR and SCC. This allocation was done at the request of DEP, SCC, and DCNR. DEP will be receiving more than \$2.8 million, SCC will receive \$4.5 million, and DCNR will receive \$2 million in IJA funds. All Chesapeake Bay grants combined, DEP will have an increase in funding over FY2023 by \$795,112, SCC will have an increase in funding by \$500,000, and DCNR will have an increase in funding by \$2 million.

EPA approved DEP's CB IJA workplan and budget on June 11, 2024. DEP received FY2024 allocation of \$2,832,693 on June 24, 2024. *The EPA IJA MEB Grant FFY25 amendment was approved for \$5,332,693 in October 2024. To expedite delivery of funds and for the first time, EPA offered to process the incremental funding amendment for Project Year 4 based on DEP's current workplan and budget submitted in May.*

EPA Announces Expedited Timeline Goal for FFY25 CB IJA Grant Funds to Support Accelerating Progress in PA

In late September 2024, EPA announced a projected, expedited timeline for the FFY 2025 CB IJA Most Effective Basin (MEB) grant award. The CBWRD is now projected to receive its FFY 2025 amendment in fall 2024. To further simplify the process, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office (CBPO) will process the amendment for Project Year 4 based on the current workplan and budget submitted by DEP in May 2024, as no changes are needed. If necessary, small changes can be completed later in accordance with EPA grant guidance. Pennsylvania will receive a total of \$9.3M in FFY 2025 IJA MEB grant awards: \$5.33 million to DEP, \$4 million to PDA, and \$0 to DCNR. The awarding of incremental Infrastructure MEB funding early in the federal fiscal year (FFY) is a programmatic change for EPA to avoid delaying implementation of projects and accelerate progress toward PA's goals. EPA typically processes amendments of grant awards for incremental funding in late spring/ summer of the same FFY; this timeline change enables the CBWRD to provide increased funds, earlier in the project period, to counties through the Countywide Action Plan Implementation Block Grant program.

2025 Community Clean Water Coordinator (CCWC) and Countywide Action Plan (CAP) Implementation Block Grant Round Open

The 2025 Community Clean Water Coordinator (CCWC) and CAP Implementation Block Grant round opened for counties to submit their project proposals on October 1, 2024, and will close on October 31, 2024. Funding for this block grant program comes from the Environmental Stewardship Fund/Growing Greener and the EPA Chesapeake Bay MEB IJA, Local Government Implementation, and Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant (CBIG) MEB grant funds. Changes to this year's round included a requirement for county partners to submit the anticipated quantity of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for each project, which allows CBWRD staff to calculate the estimated nitrogen and phosphorus reductions per project, and also a requirement to provide a detailed project description and site photo. The minimum threshold of \$200,000 per county will continue, which allows counties to plan ahead for project implementation. CBWRD staff will review the project proposals and allocation formulas and announce the awards to county partners in December 2024.

DEP's CBWRD awarded \$24 million through the [2025 Countywide Action Plan \(CAP\) Implementation Grants](#) to county teams across Pennsylvania's share of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed in early December 2024.

The 2025 CAP Implementation Grant round brought in applications for 205 projects that will be completed in the next 12 to 18 months, resulting in an estimated reduction of nearly 110,000 pounds/year of nitrogen, 42,150 pounds/year of phosphorus, and 11.8 million pounds/year of sediment. The 2025 CAP Implementation Grants include \$9.6 million from the state Environmental Stewardship Fund and \$14.4 million in EPA funding, including \$7.1 million in Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funds, to support counties' implementation of their local priority initiatives in their CAPs. In addition to the funding awarded for implementing projects, DEP also awarded nearly \$1.8 million to county teams to support local Clean Water

Coordinators who help to strategically implement the CAPs. Additional EPA funding includes \$1.12 million in Local Government Implementation (LGI) funds to be used to implement projects in the Octoraro Watershed in Chester County that will be reported toward the multi-jurisdictional Conowingo Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) as a supplement to funding for Chester County's CAP.

Chesapeake Bay Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Guidance Revisions Expected for FFY26

In late September 2024, EPA CBPO announced its intent to revise its Grant and Cooperative Agreement guidance. The EPA CBPO goal is to rewrite the Grant and Cooperative Agreement Guidance for FFY26 for program improvement, accessibility, and ease of understanding. Areas to be addressed also include state implementation funding allocations, needs and priorities in support of Beyond 2025 efforts, streamlined guidance and agreements (example: combine the separated CBRAP/ CBIG grants into one implementation grant instead of two), and barriers to implementation. EPA CBPO is working on a planning timeline to meet a goal of December 2025 for the revised guidance. Pennsylvania's CBWRD requested that EPA CBPO include PA and other Bay states' participation in this revision of the program's grant guidance. For FFY25, the revision will only focus on timeline date updates and grammatical/spelling errors, with no significant updates.

PAG-13 General Permit

On Saturday, May 18, 2024, DEP published notice in the Pennsylvania Bulletin [[54 Pa.B. 2693](#)] of an extension to the PAG-13 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges to Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s). By this action the availability of the general permit has been extended until PAG-13 is reissued. DEP had previously extended PAG-13 for a 2-year period and solicited interest in participants for a workgroup. A series of 8 meetings was held by the workgroup between November 2022 and March 2023 and DEP received a significant amount of feedback on the next version of PAG-13. DEP also received recommendations from EPA Region 3 via a letter dated February 28, 2023. DEP has prepared preliminary draft PAG-13 documents which were presented to the Water Resources Advisory Committee on November 21, 2024. Notice of the availability of the draft PAG-13 was published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin [[55 Pa.B 601](#)] on January 18, 2025 for a 60-day public comment period and the draft documents have been published to [DEP's eLibrary](#).

Chapter 102 Pilot Program

DEP has announced the availability of a Pilot program for Individual NPDES Permits for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activities. The purpose of the Pilot program is to evaluate the effect that certain modifications to existing procedures has on the quality of applications received and the amount of time necessary to review applications and take final actions. Ten delegated county conservation districts are participating in the Pilot program. Not every type of project is eligible to participate; eligibility guidelines are posted to DEP's construction stormwater website (www.dep.pa.gov/constructionstormwater). The Pilot is expected to run a minimum of four calendar quarters. Thus far DEP has received *seven* Pilot applications and two permits have been issued. If the Pilot is considered successful DEP may make some or all of the modified procedures part of its standard operating procedures for all applications.

Chapter 105 Pilot Program

DEP announced the availability of a Chapter 105 Pilot Program for Individual Joint Permit Applications to improve the quality of applications and make decisions faster, starting September 1, 2024. To participate, applicants will be required to attend 2 preapplication meetings with the second meeting serving as a pre-submission conference. Priority will be given to Publicly Funded Energy Projects and Environmental Restoration Projects. This program is available statewide at all six DEP regional offices and the Regional Permit Coordination Office. Since the pilot is for Joint Permit Applications, conservation districts will not play a direct role. Information on the Chapter 105 Pilot can be found on BWEW's webpage under the [Stream and Wetland Regulatory Program \(pa.gov\)](#).

Chesapeake Bay Milestone and Progress Evaluation and Pennsylvania's 2023 Annual Report

On August 14, 2024 EPA published their final evaluation of Pennsylvania's 2024-2025 Milestone

Commitments and 2023 Programmatic Progress. In their press release, they highlighted the incremental progress that states were making toward achieving the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Planning Targets, but more work is needed. Additionally, EPA highlighted Pennsylvania and Virginia for increasing the reductions achieved from the agriculture sector in 2023. The press release can be found here: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-releases-2-year-milestone-evaluations-chesapeake-bay-cleanup-effort-cites-0> EPA's evaluation of Pennsylvania's Milestones can be found here: https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-05/2024_pennsylvania_2022_2023_2024_2025_evaluation_draft_ms.pdf

On July 30, 2024 DEP published the 2023 Healthy Waters Healthy Communities Annual Report, which highlights the partners, projects, and progress toward achieving Pennsylvania's Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) and counties' Countywide Action Plan (CAP) goals.

The Annual Report can be found here:

<https://files.dep.state.pa.us/Water/ChesapeakeBayOffice/WIPIII/2024/Healthy%20Waters%20Annual%20Report%20signed%20FINAL%207-25-2024.pdf>

Nonpoint Source (NPS) Management Section 319

The Section 319 NPS Management grant funds are provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and authorized through Section 319(h) of the federal Clean Water Act. The program's primary purpose is to implement Section 319 Program Watershed Implementation Plans (WIP) to improve and protect Pennsylvania's waters from nonpoint source pollution.

Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023 EPA Section 319 NPS Management Grant awards were [announced](#) on October 19, 2024.

The FFY 2026 EPA Section 319 NPS Management Grants round is expected to open April 22, 2025, with applications due by June 20, 2025, at 11:59 p.m., as noticed in the Pennsylvania Bulletin around April 1, 2025. *There are many uncertainties with the upcoming year's funding and process, but DEP is proceeding as usual with the application process. Timelines for processing and administering the program are tight and if DEP waits for final guidance, it would throw off timelines and jeopardize next year's grant cycle.* The draft FFY 2025 workplans and budgets were submitted by DEP to EPA on November 11, 2024, for their initial review and comment. *DEP is waiting for comments from EPA which have been temporarily on hold while they wait for guidance on how to proceed.*

In order to meet the requirements of the federal Section 319 grant program, EPA requires that the states develop and implement their five-year Nonpoint Source (NPS) Management Program Plan and submit annual reports regarding the status of implementation of those statewide plans. Pennsylvania's current NPS Management Plan includes six goals with multiple objectives and strategies tied to each goal, which is reported on every year and published to the DEP Nonpoint Source [webpage](#). DEP has worked with other state and federal agencies and programs to draft an update to the current [2019 NPS Management Plan](#). The draft 2024-2029 NPS Management Plan was submitted to EPA for their review in October 2023, in accordance with the EPA Action Plan required deadlines. For the 2024-2029 draft NPS Management Plan, DEP has included an addition of a seventh goal focused on climate change and Environmental Justice (EJ). Also included in the draft 2024-2029 NPS Management Plan is the incorporation of recommendations from EPA's 2020 Midpoint Assessment of DEP's Nonpoint Source Management Program.

The Watershed Support section received final comments on the five-year Nonpoint Source Management Plan and have made the requested updates. The plan has been submitted with the changes for final approval to EPA. The plan is in the final stages of being approved and signed by EPA. Once the updates have been approved, the Bureau of Watershed Restoration and Nonpoint Source Management's Watershed Support section will be uploading the plan on the department's website. *Final signoff has been delayed until EPA receives guidance on how to proceed.*

In the FFY2025 EPA Section 319 NPS Management Grants, DEP received 12 applications totaling \$5,193,321. Nine applications totaling \$3,658,358 are being recommended. In total, there are \$3,658,358 for grant awards, \$1,104,542 for DEP projects, and \$10,000 for EPA (in-kind) project. The remaining \$153,632 is allotted for BMP implementation within WIP watersheds for 319 NPS Management Program grantees, which allows for DEP to fund budget over-runs for existing projects.

The FFY2025 319 NPS Management grant package received internal preliminary approval and was sent to EPA for review and comment. DEP's Bureau of Watershed Restoration and Nonpoint Source Management is awaiting comments from EPA.

DEP's Bureau of Watershed Restoration and Nonpoint Source Management is currently working on the guidance documents, grant procedures, and scoring recommendations for the 2026 grant round with an anticipated opening time on April 22, 2025. *The guidance documents have been approved and are with DEP's Document Processing for final formatting. The documents will be placed on DEP's website when finalized.*

The Watershed Support section has also been working with EPA and the Department on updating all of our reporting forms and procedures to assist in making the process both internally and externally more streamlined.

New this year:

- Section 319 WIP Revisions or updates to existing WIPs that are at least 8 years or older are encouraged to apply. New Section 319 WIP development applications are no longer an eligible project category.
- Preference will be given to Section 319 WIP implementation projects in Pennsylvania's [Environmental Justice Areas](#).

Growing Greener Plus Program

DEP anticipates opening the 2025 Growing Greener Plus grant round on April 22, 2025.

The Department received 154 Growing Greener grant requests totaling \$43,905,736.00 and one Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) request for \$159,573.00. Out of the 154 GG requests, 3 were deemed ineligible and 151 will be scored and ranked.

The 2025 Growing Greener Plus Announcement was published the week of February 10, 2025.

The Growing Greener Plus guidance documents, grant procedures, and scoring recommendations for the 2026 grant round are currently being reviewed internally and is still on schedule for an anticipated grant opening in April 2025. *The guidance documents have been approved and are with DEP's Document Processing for final formatting. The documents will be placed on DEP's website when finalized.*

The Watershed Support section has also been working with Fiscal, the Grant Center and Legal, updating all of our contracts, reporting forms, and procedures to assist in making the process both internally and externally more streamlined.

New this year:

- The proposed required match for the applicant will be reduced from 15% to 5% for general grants and from 15% to 0% for Environmental Justice Areas.
- Within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, agricultural construction projects will be considered, however [Chesapeake Bay Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan Countywide Action Plan](#) and statewide [Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program](#) funding should be the priority funding source for agricultural construction projects. A new form for the CAP Coordinators will be provided with clearer guidance.

- Preference will be given to implementation projects in Pennsylvania’s [Environmental Justice Areas](#).
- The required withholding at the end of the grant for receipt and approval of the final report will be reduced from 15% to 10%.

State Water Plan

The [2022 State Water Plan Update Report](#) (“Update Report”) is now complete and available to the public. This report is focused on items such as water resources strategies outlined in the Pennsylvania Climate Action Plan and updated regional watershed priorities. In addition to this important document, a [Digital Water Atlas Story Map](#) was created as a planning tool for professionals and as a research tool for academics.

The first round of meetings for 2024 was successfully completed in April with all seven committees having met. The content of these meetings consisted of an update from DEP on matters such as recruiting and outreach. There was also discussion surrounding the formation of a workgroup to draft a framework for Integrated Water Resources Management. This workgroup has now met three times and discussed the changes that will be made to their section of the report, a plan for carrying out work, and the different roles at play within the field of Integrated Water Resources Management. Several committees struggled to achieve quorum during their meetings leading to an emphasis on recruiting in the coming months to ensure that business can be conducted in future meetings. Several potential new members have submitted their documents for review to the Department. The Citizen’s Advisory Council can assist with recruitment efforts by referring anyone who could fill a committee vacancy to James Horton (jahorton@pa.gov). Up to date information on current committee membership and vacancies can be found [here](#).

The second round of meetings took place in October 2024. *A third round of meetings is scheduled for October 2025 with all seven committees.* In accordance with Act 220 of 2002’s requirements, a new update will be needed in 2027. *The Department has begun working on these 2027 updates.*

Public Water System Technical Assistance Center (PWS-TAC) Board Meeting

The most recent meeting of the Public Water System Technical Assistance Center (PWS TAC) Board was held on Thursday, February 20, 2025, in Room 105 of the Rachel Carson State Office Building. The agenda and meeting materials were posted to the [PWS-TAC Board](#) website 3 weeks prior to the meeting date.

The PWS TAC Board provides direction and advice to DEP on water system technical and management assistance programs; and to comment on policies, guidance and regulations as they may affect all public water systems, with an emphasis on the unique effects on small public water systems.

The next PWS-TAC Board meeting will be held on Thursday, May 15, 2025, in room 105 at the Rachel Carson State Office Building.

Streamlining Permits for Economic Expansion and Development (SPEED)

In July, as part of the 2024-2025 budget, the Streamlining Permits for Economic Expansion and Development or SPEED Program was enacted into law as Article 18 of Act 54 of 2024.

- *SPEED establishes a staff augmentation program where an applicant for certain types of permits can select to use a Qualified Professional or QP for review of an application rather than DEP or a county conservation district.*
- *The types of authorizations covered by SPEED include all Chapter 102 permits, individual Chapter 105 permits, Dam Safety permits, and Air Quality plan approvals.*
- *The applicant must pay the QP’s fee, which will be held until a final decision is made on the application. The applicant will pay for the QP’s review; however, DEP and conservation districts will continue to make final decisions regarding applications.*
- *There are criteria for who can be a QP in the law.*

- *QP must be a licensed engineer, geologist, land surveyor, or landscape architect with a minimum of 5 years of permitting experience.*

The Department has been working on developing this program since the passage of the legislation. A solicitation for QPs is ongoing and the submitted bids by potential QPs are under review. The Department continues to move forward in preparation for implementation soon by developing processes and training to onboard QPs and incorporate them into Department permit review processes.

Attachment 1

2025 Events Calendar

Please consult the [DEP Calendar of Events](#) for a comprehensive listing of upcoming events and information on how to attend. The Calendar can be accessed in the Public Participation Tab on the DEP website; click on “Public Participation” then “Calendar of Events.” Unless otherwise indicated below or on the DEP Calendar of Events, there will be virtual and in-person attendance options for each event.

April	
1	Climate Action Plan Virtual Workshop: Utilities and Energy Sector Conversation 12 – 1:30 pm
3	Climate Action Plan Virtual Workshop: Local Government Conversation 6 – 7:30 pm
7	Climate Action Plan Virtual Workshop: Local Government Conversation 12 – 1:30 pm
8	Environmental Quality Board, 9 am
8	Citizens Advisory Council, 12:30 pm
9	State Board for Certification of Water and Wastewater Systems Operators, 10 am
9	Technical Advisory Committee on Diesel-Powered Equipment, 10 am
10	Agricultural Advisory Board, 1pm
14	Climate Action Plan Virtual Workshop: Labor Sector Conversation 12 – 1:30 pm
16	Sewage Advisory Committee, 10am
17	Climate Action Plan Virtual public webinar 6 – 7:30 pm
22	Climate Change Advisory Committee, 9am
23	Cleanup Standards Scientific Advisory Board, 9:30 am
24	Mining and Reclamation Advisory Board, 10am
29	Laboratory Accreditation Advisory Committee, 9am
30	Radiation Protection Advisory Committee, 9am
May	
7	State Board for Certification of Sewage Enforcement Officers, 10am
8	Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee, 9:15am
13	Citizens Advisory Council, 12:30pm
13	Environmental Justice Advisory Board, 10am
13	Environmental Quality Board, 9am
14	Water Resources Advisory Committee, 9:30am
15	Public Water System Technical Assistance Center Board, 9am
20	Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority, 10am
21	Aggregate Advisory Board, 10am
22	Small Business Compliance Advisory Committee, 10am

This report was prepared by Casey Damicantonio, DEP Policy Office, Administrative Assistant. For questions or requests, please email cdamicanto@pa.gov.