### Draft Assessment and Listing Methodology Notice of Availability for Public Comment

The Department of Environmental Protection (Department) is making available for public comment its draft 2015 Assessment and Listing Methodology (methodology). Sections 303(d) and 305(b) of the Federal Clean Water Act require states to report on the condition of all their waters in the biennial Integrated Report (report). The methodologies referred to in this public notice will be used, when finalized, to assess the quality of Pennsylvania’s waters pursuant to this legal mandate.

Stream and lake evaluations presented in the report must be supported by assessment methodologies based on sound science and technical procedures that are clear and complete. The methodology is a compilation of the protocols being used to assess waters that may appear in the 2016 Pennsylvania Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report.

The protocols comprising the methodology describe the field data collection procedures and data analysis methods used to obtain and evaluate water quality data. The individual protocols apply to a wide range of water resource types, data sources and environmental indicators.

The draft methodology is available on the Department's web site at http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/dep\_home/5968. Select ''Water'' in the left side menu, then ''Bureau of Point and Non-point Source Management'' in the left side menu, then “Water Quality Standards” on the right side menu, and finally “2015 Assessment Methodology”. The previous 2013 Assessment Methodology is also available for comparison, but not comment. Because of the large number of pages, the methodology will not be available in hardcopy.

The Department will accept comments on the new assessment documents including: *Nutrient Impact Assessment*, *Cause and Effect Surveys,* and *Bacteriological Sampling Protocol*. The Department will also accept comments on the following amended assessment methods from the 2013 Assessment Methodology: *Lake Assessment Protocol; Aquatic Macrophyte Cover; Plankton Sampling;* and *Chlorophyll-a Sampling*.

Persons wishing to comment on the draft methodology may do so by accessing the [Environmental Regulations Online Comment System](http://www.ahs.dep.pa.gov/RegComments) page at http://www.ahs.dep.pa.gov/eComment to leave electronic comments, including a one page summary, may be submitted to the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) or written comments and summaries can also be mailed to the EQB at P.O. Box 8477, Harrisburg, PA 17105-8477 no later than November 17, 2015. Comments should be addressed to the Division of Water Quality Standards. Comments received by facsimile will not be accepted.

The Department will consider all public comments regarding the appropriateness of the narrative, collection methods and data analyses protocols contained in the methodology.

Persons in need of accommodations as provided for in the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 should contact Gary Walters at (717) 787-9637 or through the Pennsylvania AT&T Relay Service at (800) 654-5894 (TTD) to discuss how the Department may accommodate their needs.

John Quigley,

Secretary