

## **WATER QUALITY STANDARDS PROGRAM**

The [Water Quality Division \(Division\)](#), located in DEP's Bureau of Clean Water, develops, reviews and maintains Pennsylvania's [water quality standards](#) (WQS). WQS includes water uses, numeric and narrative criteria to protect those uses, and an antidegradation policy. The Division is also responsible for the preparation of this Integrated Report, which includes the development of appropriate monitoring and assessment methodologies to guide impairment listings on the Integrated Report. DEP routinely evaluates and revises both the protected water uses for surface waters of the Commonwealth and the water quality criteria in 25 Pa. Code Chapter 93. As part of every regulatory update, the public is provided an opportunity to submit comments on the proposed regulation and to present testimony at a public hearing.

Under the Federal Clean Water Act, States are required to periodically, but at least once every three years, review and revise their WQS. This practice is commonly referred to as the triennial review of water quality standards. The tenth triennial review of water quality standards is currently underway. The proposed rulemaking will be published for public comment in October 2023.

The Division has also developed regulatory updates to [25 Pa. Code § 93.8d](#) (relating to development of site-specific water quality criteria) and a site-specific methylmercury criterion for Ebaughs Creek in York County. This proposed rulemaking is currently underway. The proposed rulemaking will be provided for public comment in late-2023.

In addition to these rulemakings, the Division recently completed the [Dunbar Creek et al. Stream Redesignation rulemaking](#) and is developing several additional stream redesignation rulemakings. Stream redesignation rulemakings ensure the surface waters of the Commonwealth are protected at the appropriate level. Stream Redesignation rulemakings, like Dunbar Creek et al., are typically prepared in response to Environmental Quality Board petitions, requests from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), ongoing Statewide monitoring efforts, and any errors identified in Chapter 93. The Dunbar Creek et al. rulemaking contained redesignations to more restrictive water uses, and less restrictive water uses and included special protection water uses and non-special protection water uses.

Changes to WQS have the potential to impact many activities and programs within DEP, including NPDES-permitted activities and other DEP permits and approvals. The specific impacts to the various DEP programs and permits or other approvals are determined on a case-by-case.