



News for Immediate Release

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EPA Approves DEP Water Quality Report; Data Do Not Support Susquehanna River Impairment

Harrisburg – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has approved Pennsylvania's 2012 Integrated Waters Report, the Department of Environmental Protection announced today.

Required every two years by the federal Clean Water Act, the report describes the water quality of the state's many creeks, streams, rivers and waterways.

"Our experts put together this report using scientific rigor and a lot of hard work," Department of Environmental Protection Acting Secretary Chris Abruzzo said. "We are pleased EPA has recognized our efforts and that we can continue to move forward with protecting the state's waters."

The final approved report does not include an impairment designation of the lower Susquehanna River. DEP continues to thoroughly study the river, its main waterways and a variety of pollutants.

When water quality in a surface water does not meet specific water quality standards outlined by the Clean Water Act, the state must propose to EPA listing an impairment for that section of a waterway. If EPA approves, the state must then develop a plan to restore water quality by controlling the contributing pollutants. Federal funding and resources are not, however, guaranteed should such a listing be made and approved.

The state can also propose changing the reason for listing a waterway as impaired. In 1996, Pennsylvania originally designated as impaired a section of Paxton Creek in Dauphin County because of nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus. Further DEP study and analysis showed that the lower portion of Paxton Creek's water quality impairment was the result of combined sewer overflows, which happen when sewage pipes that are mixed with stormwater collection systems overflow during rain events.

For more information or to view the report and EPA's letter, visit www.dep.state.pa.us and click the "Susquehanna River Study Update" button on the homepage.

Media contact: Kevin Sunday, 717-787-1323

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