

# Department of Environmental Quality

## Notice of 30-day Public Comment Period on revisions to the List of Impaired Waters Prioritized for TMDL or TMDL Alternative Development for 2016-2022

### The Public Comment Process

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) seeks written or electronic comments from interested persons on the revised list of impaired waters prioritized for [Total Maximum Daily Load \(TMDL\) or TMDL alternative development](#) throughout 2016-2022. The public comment period will begin on April 4<sup>th</sup> and end on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Please note that all written comments should include the name, address, and telephone number of the person submitting the comments. DEQ will hold a public meeting to address and discuss the revised list of impaired waters prioritized for TMDL or TMDL alternative development if there is sufficient interest from the public. For more information or to submit written or electronic comments, please contact:

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### The Background

DEQ is implementing the national [303\(d\) Program Vision](#), which facilitates the prioritization of impaired waters for TMDL or TMDL alternative development throughout 2016-2022. While the national 303(d) Program Vision involves prioritizing impaired waters for TMDL or TMDL alternative development, DEQ took this opportunity to also prioritize impaired waters that require a stressor analysis report or a natural conditions report. TMDLs or TMDL alternatives are reports that outline necessary reductions in pollutant or pollution loads in order to restore water quality. In some cases, stressor analyses must be conducted prior to any restoration plan development due to the uncertain causes of water quality impairment. These reports analyze water quality data to determine what the most probable stressors are that contribute to the impaired status of the water. In other cases where either a stressor analysis or a watershed characteristic suggests that the impaired status of the water is due more to natural conditions than human activity, a natural conditions report is conducted.

In the late summer of 2015, DEQ assembled a draft list of prioritized impaired waters and public noticed that list for public comment on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The 30-day public comment period lasted until August 26, 2015. Only one comment was received and addressed by DEQ. It did not result in any changes to the priorities list that was then finalized following the close of the comment period and submitted to EPA in accordance with the new 303(d) Program Vision. Soon thereafter in the early winter of 2015-2016, EPA announced that these priorities lists could be revised. This opportunity to revise the priorities list was due to challenges incurred by states throughout this first submittal of priority waters as part of the new 303(d) Program Vision, in addition to the fact that EPA was allowing TMDL revisions to be included as priorities for the first time. Accordingly, this 30-day public comment period is for the revised list of prioritized impaired waters.

Before finalizing the revised list of prioritized impaired waters, DEQ is seeking comments from the public on this revised list of priorities. DEQ will hold a public meeting to address and discuss the revised priorities list if there is sufficient interest from the public. Once all of the comments have been addressed following the 30-day public comment period, DEQ will finalize the revised 2016-2022 priorities list and post it on [DEQ TMDL program webpage](#). The final list will also be published in the 2016, 2018, and 2020 biennial [305\(b\)/303\(d\) Integrated Reports](#), where it will be available for additional public comment under the comment period for the entire Integrated Report.

### External links to priorities information

1. [Description of the Process for Prioritizing Impaired Waters](#)
2. [Revised List of Prioritized Impaired Waters](#)