



Notice

Public comment sought on 303(d) listing policy

The Department of Ecology (Ecology) is seeking comments from the public on updating the policy for placing polluted waters on the state's 303(d) list of impaired lakes, streams, rivers, and bays.

About the 303(d) list

Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act requires Washington State periodically to prepare a list of all surface waters in the state where pollutants have impaired the beneficial uses of the water, such as for drinking, recreation, aquatic habitat, and industrial use. Types of pollutants commonly found in Washington include fecal coliform, high temperatures, excess nutrients, low levels of dissolved oxygen, and toxic substances.

The 303(d) list is based on all readily available data from public and private sources, and is prepared by Ecology. This list was last prepared in 1998. Ecology is now beginning the process to prepare the 2002 list.

Waters placed on the 303(d) list require the preparation of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) or Water Cleanup Plans, a key tool in the work to clean up polluted waters. TMDLs describe the type, amount and sources of water pollution in a particular water body, analyze how much the pollution needs to be reduced or eliminated to achieve clean water, and provide strategies to control pollution. In addition, even before a TMDL is completed, the inclusion of a water on the 303(d) list can lead to Ecology requiring stricter pollution limits when issuing permits for that waterbody.

Ecology's assessment of which waters to place on the 303(d) list is guided by federal laws, state water quality standards, and the state's 303(d) policy. This policy describes how the standards are applied, requirements for the data used, and how to prioritize TMDLs, among other issues. The goal is to ensure that all impaired waters are identified and that no waters are mistakenly identified as impaired.

Updated Policy

The current policy, known as Program Policy 1-11 *Assessment of Water Quality for the Section 303(d) List*, was last used in 1998 to guide the 303(d) assessment. Ecology has drafted an updated policy in response to new guidance from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, and to clarify and improve the assessment process. Significant changes in the new policy include:

- New categories to better reflect conditions and circumstances of different waters;
- Extended waterbody segments, to address data collected across segment lines;
- Changes in data quality assurance requirements;
- More detailed explanation of the assessment process and criteria; and
- Changes in how the water quality standards are applied to temperature, dissolved oxygen, and some other pollutants.

How can you comment on the updated draft policy?

Ecology is seeking public comments on the draft 303(d) policy. The policy can be found at: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/303d/index.html Paper copies are also available. The deadline for public comments is **5:00 p.m., Monday, July 8, 2002**. Please submit them in writing to the address or e-mail on the back of this notice, or at any of the public workshops.

An invitation to public workshops

Ecology will host public workshops in eight cities across Washington to discuss the draft updated 303(d) policy. Ecology staff will explain the draft policy and the full 303(d) assessment process, and the public will have an opportunity to ask questions and informally share their thoughts with Ecology staff and other participants. Participants should also formally submit any comments they have in writing.

Workshops will be held twice each day: **2:00-4:00 p.m.** and **6:00-8:00 p.m.** Each workshop will be the same, so it is only necessary to attend one. The public workshops will be held in the following cities:

City	Date	Location
Spokane	June 5	Spokane County Cooperative Extension, Room E, N. 222 Havana Street
Yakima	June 6	Dept. of Ecology, Central Region Office, 15 West Yakima Avenue, Suite 200
Vancouver	June 10	Dept. of Ecology, Vancouver Field Office, 2108 Grand Boulevard
Wenatchee	June 12	Wenatchee Valley College, Wells Hall, Campus Theater, 1300 Fifth Street
Walla Walla	June 13	Walla Walla Community College, Main Building, Room 185A, 500 Tausick Way
Bellevue	June 19	Dept. of Ecology, Northwest Region Office, 3190 - 160th Avenue SE
Bellingham	June 20	Bellingham Public Library, 210 Central Avenue
Lacey	June 27	Dept. of Ecology, Headquarters/Southwest Region Office, 300 Desmond Drive

For more information

To receive a paper copy of the draft updated 303(d) policy, submit comments on it, find out more about the 303(d) list, or ask any other question about this process, please contact:

Matthew Green
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 P. O. Box 47600
 Olympia, WA 98504-7600
 E-mail: 303d@ecy.wa.gov
 Phone: (360) 407-6386

Este *Boletín* está disponible en Español. Para conseguir más información al respecto, favor de ponerse en contacto con:

William Green
 Department of Ecology
 P. O. Box 47600
 Olympia, WA 98504-7600
 E-mail: wgre461@ecy.wa.gov
 Phone: (360) 407-6795

Ecology is an equal-opportunity agency. If you have special accommodation needs or require materials in an alternative format, please contact Matthew Green at (360) 407-6386 (Voice) or (360) 407-6006 (TDD).



Department of Ecology
 Water Quality Program
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Comment deadline July 8

Workshops in 8 cities