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P.O. Box 8467

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April 24, 2009

Bureau of Water Standards and Facility Regulation

717-772-2189

Re: PA DEP has withdrawn from the DMR-QA Program

Dear NPDES Permittee or Accredited Laboratory Personnel:

On July 14, 2008, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved the Department's request to withdraw from the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Discharge Monitoring Report Quality Assurance (DMR-QA) Program. EPA granted approval of the withdrawal because the Department's state-wide laboratory accreditation program is an adequate surrogate for the DMR-QA Program. The withdrawal is effective beginning in 2009.

What does this mean?

NPDES permittees will no longer receive or be required to complete DMR-QA Studies from EPA. Instead, the Department's Laboratory Accreditation Program will continue to track compliance with the proficiency test (PT) requirements through the Laboratory Accreditation Program. As per the Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Act and associated regulations (Chapter 252), all environmental laboratories performing testing and analysis for compliance purposes must be in compliance with and obtain laboratory accreditation according to Chapter 252. Chapter 252 includes laboratory supervisor requirements and other quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) requirements, including the requirement to successfully analyze at least one PT sample every 12 months. Failure to successfully complete a PT study within the previous 12 months will result in suspension or revocation of accreditation. Chapter 252 requires all laboratories that lose accreditation for any field of accreditation to notify their clients within 72 hours of suspension/revocation.

What if my permit mandates participation in the DMR-QA Program?

Beginning in 2009, the DMR-QA Program is no longer required in Pennsylvania. NPDES permittees are exempt from any permit condition that requires participation in the DMR-QA Program. The Department's state-wide laboratory accreditation program is an adequate surrogate for the DMR-QA Program. As such, all permittees should ensure, on an on-going basis, that they are using a laboratory with the appropriate level of accreditation for all required analyses. Remember, laboratories that maintain their accreditation are in compliance with all QA/QC requirements, including the requirement to analyze at least one PT sample every 12 months. Use of the DMR-QA Program permit condition will be phased-out as permits are renewed.



What do I need to do now?

Any laboratory that holds a valid Certificate of Accreditation issued by the Department's Laboratory Accreditation Program is required to successfully analyze at least one PT study for each requested field of accreditation at least once every 12 months. In the past, DMR-QA samples were considered an acceptable alternative to PT samples. Laboratories will now need to contact an approved PT Provider to request a Water Pollution (WP) Study. Laboratories are only required to perform WP Studies for those fields of accreditation for which accreditation is sought.

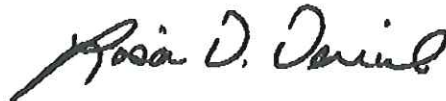
Any laboratory that successfully participated in DMR-QA 28 and used this study to count toward the Chapter 252 PT requirements must successfully participate in a WP Study for all requested fields of accreditation published in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin* by August 31, 2009 to ensure continued accreditation.

Where can I get more information about the Department's Laboratory Accreditation Program and PT requirements?

For more information, please go to the Department's Web site at www.depweb.state.pa.us/labs, and choose "Laboratory Accreditation Program" on the left-hand side. You may also contact Laboratory Accreditation personnel via e-mail at eplabaccredit@state.pa.us or by phone at 717-346-7200. Please see the enclosed NPDES Laboratory and Reporting Update for a quick look at what's new.

Please feel free to contact me via e-mail at ldaniels@state.pa.us or by phone at 717-772-2189 if you have any questions about this letter or require additional information.

Sincerely,



Lisa D. Daniels
Chief
Operations Section

Enclosure