

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
Department of Environmental Protection
Office of Water Management
September 21, 2004
787-4686

SUBJECT: Water Resources Planning Process Status and Update

TO: Statewide Committee Members

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In preparation for the September 27, 2004 meeting of the Statewide Committee, I respectfully submit the following status and current activities update report.

Administrative Activities Update:

- **Penn/DOT Participation:** On August 27, 2004 Department staff (John Hines) met with Larry King, Deputy Secretary for Transportation and Planning and Danielle Spila, Department of Transportation (DOT) Policy Office, to discuss DOT involvement with the State Water Plan process and particularly as an advisor/observer of the Statewide Water Resources Committee. Ms. Spila will serve as a contact for staff and will coordinate DOT participation. Two other issues discussed were sharing of DOT data and model of the DOT federal funding process. John Hines followed up the data discussions with a meeting with Tom Ten Eyck and Frank Desendi, DOT Bureau of Planning and Research, to discuss data relevant issues. Mr. Desendi compiled a list of data sources for DEP and is currently under review.
- **State Water Plan Funding:** Currently, DEP staff is working from various funding mechanisms to support the water planning process. Staff is able to continue both in-house work and the United States Geological Survey work with existing funds. DEP continues to work with the Army Corps of Engineers in securing future federal funding through the Water Resources Development Act and other venues. DEP Coastal Resource Management Program will be allocating federal grant funds in support of the Lake Erie regional component. Staff is currently formulating a grant task for those funds. Staff is also working through the DEP Program Revision Request process to seek funding for next years budget

(FY 05-06). As part of the current years budget (FY 04-05), SRBC and DRBC were allocated 500K and 250K respectfully to support the states efforts in the water plan process. Staff will work with the two commissions as well as the other river basin commissions to enhance this funding in other basins.

- **Data Integration/USGS Update:** A key factor of Act 220 implementation is data integration and the development of an over all data management system for use both internally at DEP and externally. The overall vision for the State Water Plan is a system that helps shape our decision making and program implementation processes. DEP Water Management staff has been working with Bureau of Information Technology to design a system to meet the needs of Act 220 as well as other water related programs. The State Water Plan will be supported by a DEP enterprise system that will integrate water features and their location in the Commonwealth landscape. The data needs to be integrated regardless of the Department's organizational chart or delegated duties/tasks due to legislation, regulations, grant work plans, or Commonwealth agreements with partners. The Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) and National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) will make up the backbone of a data management system. USGS was tasked last year to develop the water budget tool based on NHD that can calculate the "debits and credits" based on water resources and withdrawals. The prototype will be delivered in March 2005 with a production copy delivered in July 2005. On this system it is planned that watershed layouts will share the same hydro network. It does not matter how the landscape is subdivided into watersheds once the water reaches the stream and river system. This is a giant leap in the right direction.

Regional Committee Activities:

- **Ohio:** The Ohio regional committee will meet at the ALCOSAN facility in Pittsburgh on October 18th. The committee will be discussing transportation/navigation issues with the USACE, as well as a presentation given by ALCOSAN on sewage discharges.
- **Great Lakes:** The Great Lakes regional committee will meet at the Erie County Conservation District on October 12th. This committee's primary focus for the October meeting will be to discuss the draft Great Lakes Annex 2001 Implementing Agreements and finalize any comments the committee would like to provide to the Council of Great Lakes Governors.
- **Upper Susquehanna:** The next Upper Susquehanna regional committee meeting will be held on October 21st at the Centre County Solid Waste Interpretive Center in Bellefonte. This regional committee will continue to focus their meeting on reports from watershed groups in the basin.
- **Lower Susquehanna:** The Lower Susquehanna regional committee will meet at the DEP Southcentral Regional Office in Harrisburg on October 4th. The committee will discuss the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategies.
- **Delaware:** The Delaware regional committee will meet at Grey Towers National Historic Landmark in Milford, Pike County, on October 14th. This

committee will meet with the County Planners from the upper portion of the Delaware basin.

- **Potomac:** The next Potomac regional committee meeting will be held in Chambersburg on October 15th. At the meeting, the committee will discuss the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategies. A representative from the Gettysburg Municipal Authority will also be present at the meeting to discuss the potential for drawing water from Marsh Creek to support a proposed development in Adams County.

Subcommittee Status and Reports:

- **Critical Water Planning Area-** The Committee continues to meet both in person and via conference call. The Chair will provide a detailed update at the meeting.
- **Policy and Integration:** From the conference call on Sept. 15, 2004. The committee concurred to a draft vision statement (provided mailing packet). The Draft Final Vision Statement will be presented to the Statewide Committee on September 27.
- **Public Participation:** The Public Participation workgroup is currently implementing "Stage One" of the outreach process that the Statewide committee approved at the May meeting. The regional committees identified individual regional stakeholders at the August round of meetings, and the Water Planning Office staff is incorporating these addresses into an excel spreadsheet, in preparation for a mass distribution of the Universal Message document. In addition, Water Planning Office staff has been attending organizational events, when possible, to spread the word about the State Water Plan. Finally, a draft media strategy document is being prepared, which will be presented to the entire workgroup for their comments in the coming weeks.