

Interstate Water Resource Management Division Updates

Bureau of Safe Drinking Water
November 4, 2025





Pennsylvania
Department of
Environmental Protection

Objectives

- State Water Plan Update
- Drought
- River Basin Commission Update
- Great Lakes Update
- Coastal Zone Management Update

State Water Plan Updates

- Act 220 requires that the State Water Plan is updated every 5 years.
 - Last update in 2022
- 6 Regional Meetings and 1 Statewide Meeting took place in October all in-person
- 10 new committee members!
- Plans for the coming year include:
 - Local Government Decision Making Tools
 - More presentations
- Reach out to RA-Statewaterplan@pa.gov to join us!

Drought Management 2025

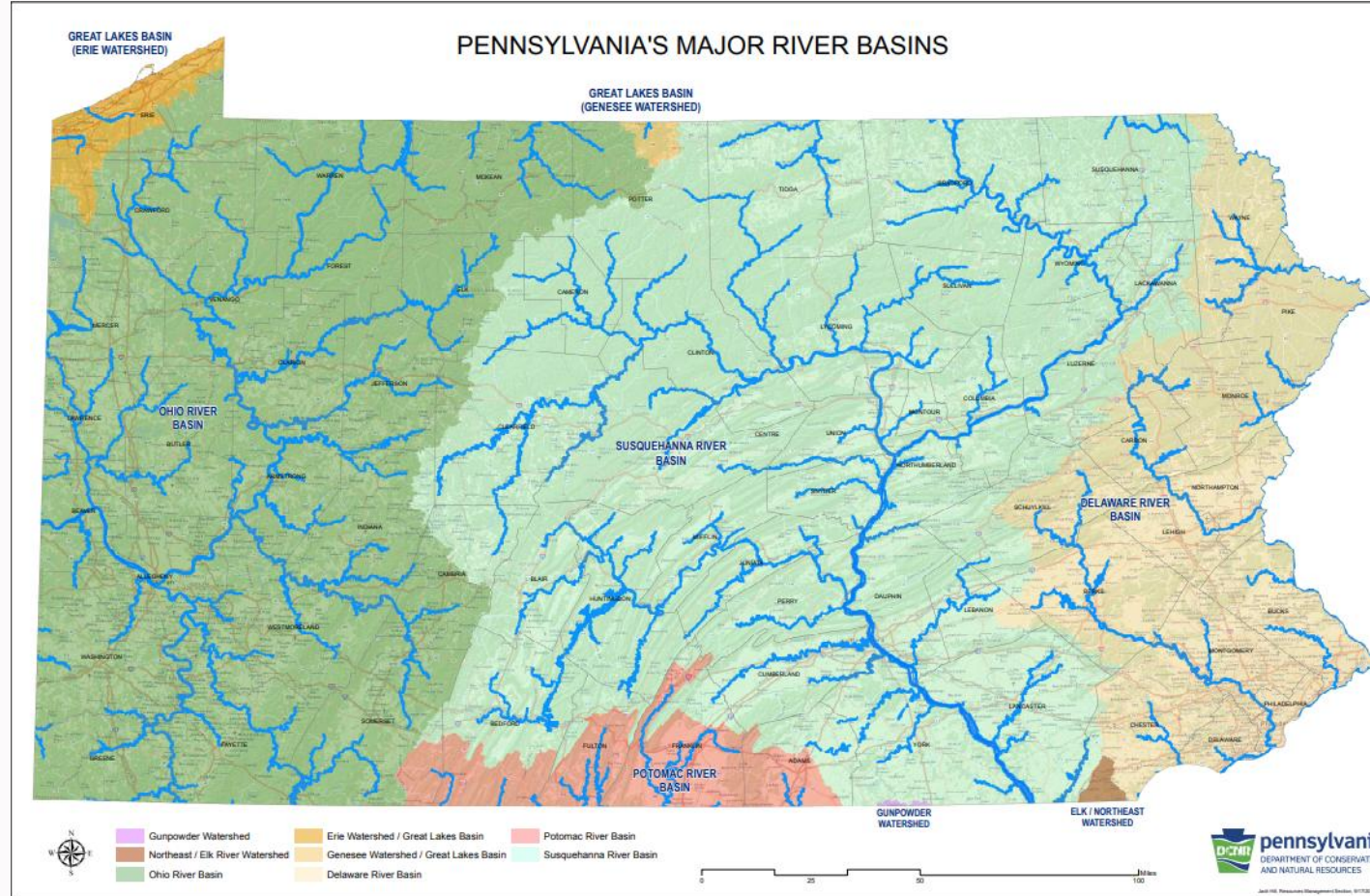


- Began in late 2024
- In some parts of the Commonwealth, it neared early 2000's drought severity
- Drought began in the southwest but grew to its worst in the southeast
- Drought's longevity was driven by persistent groundwater deficits
- As of October 3, 25 counties have been placed in drought watch
- [Drought Information | Department of Environmental Protection | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#)



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River Basin Commissions



Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC)

- Established in 1961
- Members: Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Federal Government (Army Corps)
- Has Regulatory Authority
- Core Responsibilities: Water Allocation (Surface & Groundwater), Water Quality Standards, Conservation, Restoration, Public Education & Engagement
- Southeastern PA Groundwater Protected Area (GWPA)
- Entire basin upstream of Trenton is Special Protection Waters



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Office of Delaware River Master (ODRM)

- Established by U.S. Supreme Court Decree in 1954
- Office within U.S. Geological Survey
- Decree Party Members: Pennsylvania, New York, New York City, New Jersey, Delaware
- Core Responsibilities: Monitor multiple factors to direct reservoir releases to meet various flow objectives
- Flexible Flow Management Program (FFMP)
- All decisions must be unanimous

Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC)

- Established in 1970
- Members: Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, Federal Government (Army Corps)
- Has Regulatory Authority
- Core Responsibilities: Water Allocation (Surface & Groundwater), Conservation, Restoration, Public Education & Engagement
- Stream & Watershed Enhancement Grant
 - Up to \$5,000 grants for community-based and water resources projects or events that improve, restore or protect our local watersheds.
 - >\$300,000 supporting 68 projects in first 2 years

Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB)

- Established in 1940, Amended in 1970
- Members: Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, District of Columbia, Federal Government (Presidential or Congressional Appointees)
- Advisory, Non-Regulatory
- Core Responsibilities: Data Collection (Biological, Water Quality), State Cooperation & Recommendations, Public Education & Engagement, Advise on Water Supply /Source Protection for DC area
- Flow & Drought Management for Washington DC

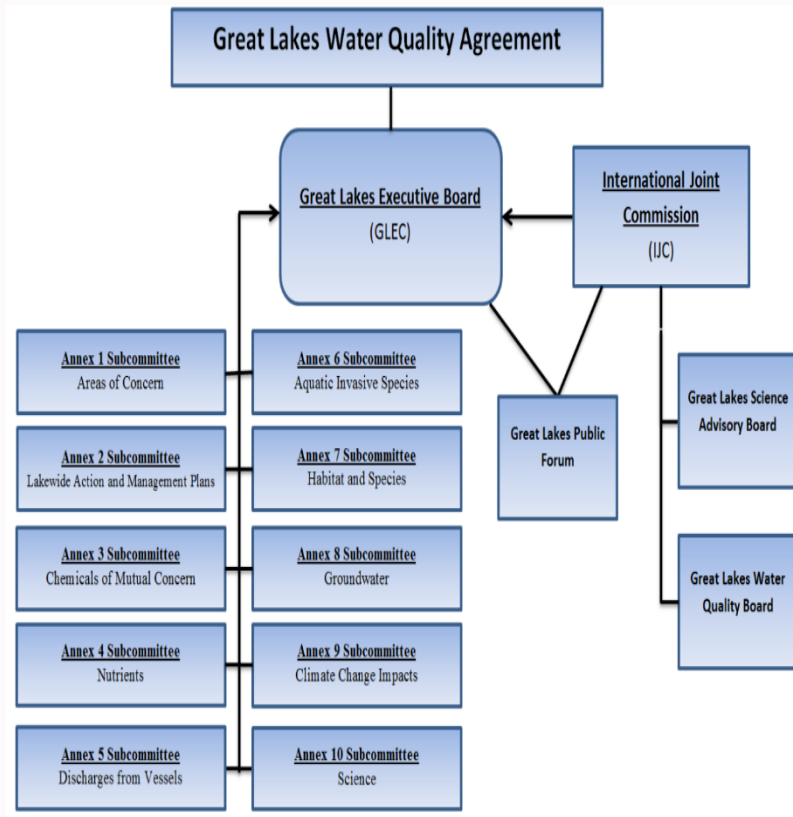
Ohio River Valley Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO)

- Established in 1948
- Members: Pennsylvania, New York, Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Federal Government (Presidential Appointees)
- Has Regulatory Authority, but uses selectively
- Core Responsibilities: Data Collection (Biological, Water Quality), Preservation & Restoration, Recommendations to States, Public Education & Engagement, Emergency/Spill Response Coordination
- Promoting Ohio River Restoration Program Act in U.S. Congress

Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement

- ***First GLWQA signed between US and Canada in 1972***
 - Focused on reducing algae through a coordinated approach to reducing phosphorus inputs.
 - Established basin-wide water quality goals and formed the Great Lakes Water Quality Board and Research Advisory Board.
- ***GLWQA of 1978:***
 - Reaffirmed and replaced the 1972 Agreement.
 - Focused on an “ecosystem approach” with an end goal of restoring and maintaining chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Great Lakes.
 - Included additional emphasis on toxic substances.

GLWQA 2012 Annexes



- The Annexes are special section that deal with a specific topic.
- There are 10 Annexes in the 2012 Agreement.
- Aside from AOCs, the **Nutrients Annex** is a high-interest topic on the Great Lakes, with focus on Lake Erie.



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Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact & Agreement

- Governs water use and diversions within the Great Lakes Basin. Designed to protect resource and reduce conflict between political jurisdictions.
- **Compact** is signed between the states, given consent by Congress, implemented by states.
- **Agreement** is between states AND provinces. Has same components as the compact.
- Formalized in 2008.



Photo Credit: Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers

Great Lakes Commission

- Created in 1955 by interstate compact between the Great Lakes states.
- Received Congressional consent in 1968.
- Ontario and Quebec recognized via Declaration of Partnership in 1999.
- Pennsylvania maintains 3 Commissioners, and 2 Alternate Commissioners.
- Core Competencies include:
 - Facilitation and Consensus Building
 - Policy Coordination and Advocacy
 - Information Management and Delivery
 - Regional Program Management
 - Communications Outreach



Great Lakes Commission

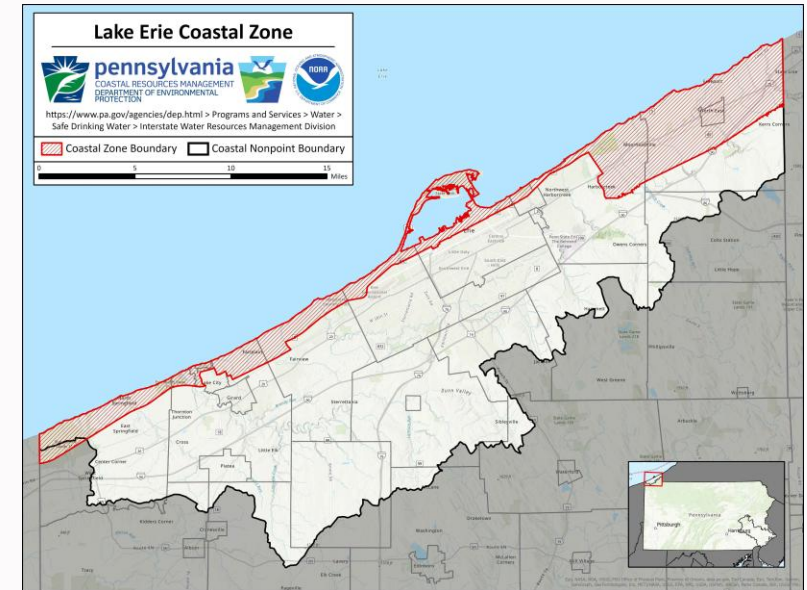
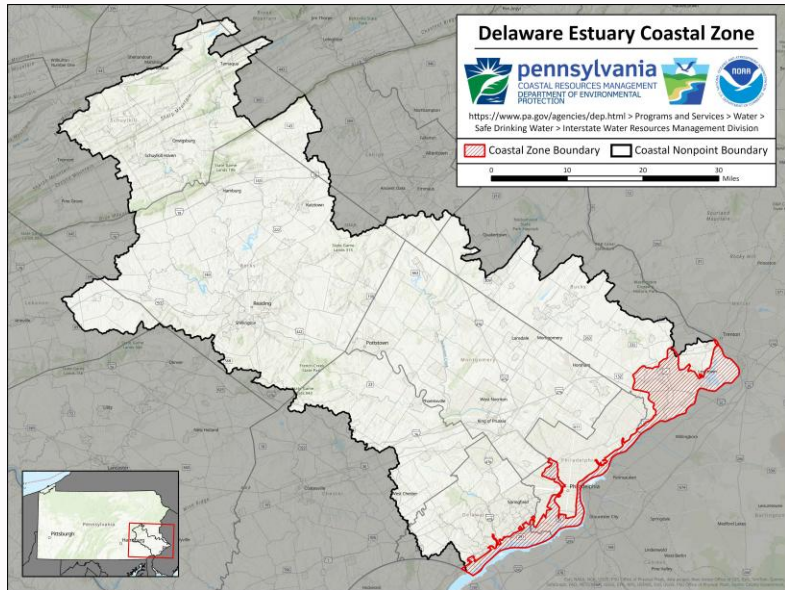
- Most important function: non-partisan, information-based policy and issue analysis and advocacy on behalf of the states and provinces.
- Strategic Program Areas: Resilient Great Lakes Basin, Clean and Safe Drinking Water, Sustainable and Equitable Water Use, Safe and Reliable Waterways, Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems
- Support water quality improvements and AOC cleanup efforts and Lake Erie nutrients planning and ErieStat.
- Support improvements for maritime, commercial navigation, and transportation/locks.



Great Lakes Program Update

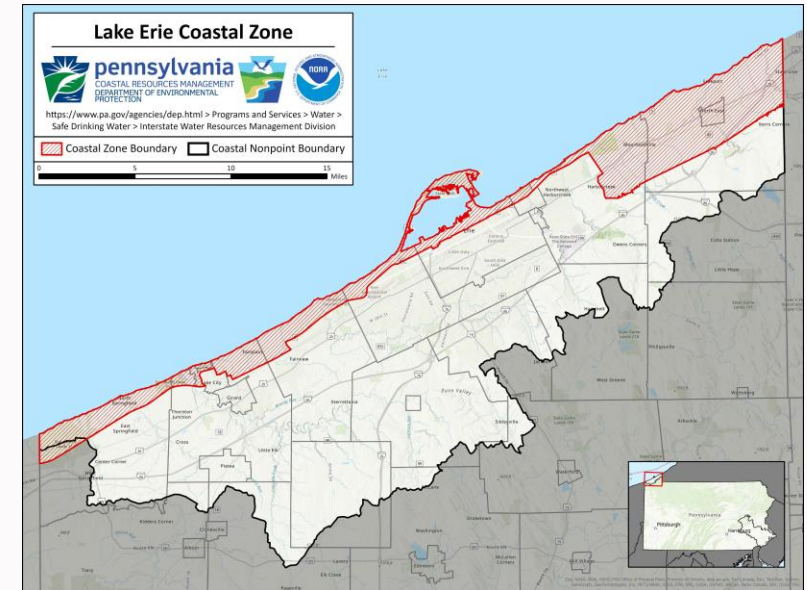
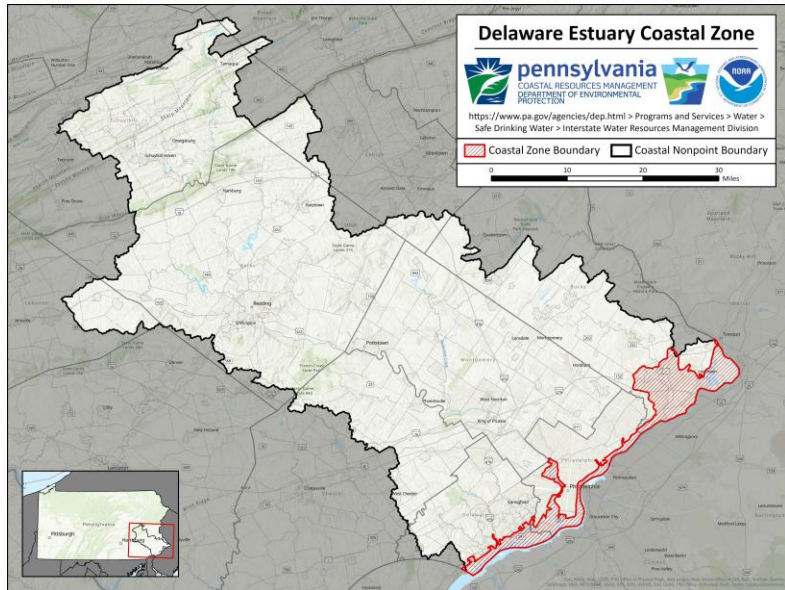
- Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) – Supports projects and works to improve the Lake Erie basin
- Lake Erie Phosphorus Reduction Domestic Action Plan
- Habitat Identification

Coastal Zone Management Update



- Established in PA in 1980 and funded by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Balances resource protection and development in PA's two Coastal Zones
 - 112 miles in the Delaware Estuary Coastal Zone
 - 77 miles in the Lake Erie Coastal Zone

Coastal Zone Management Update



- Program offers Coastal Zone grants for projects addressing public access, coastal hazards and non-point source pollution reduction
- Since 1980 more than \$50,000,000 in funding has been awarded to over 850 Coastal Zone grant projects
- Since 2016, over \$600,000 has been awarded for HABs sampling and testing in Lake Erie
- Since 2020, more than \$100,000 has been awarded for PFAS research in the Delaware Estuary



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The Department of Environmental Protection's mission is to protect Pennsylvania's air, land and water resources and to provide for the health and safety of its residents and visitors, consistent with the rights and duties established under the Environmental Rights Amendment (Article 1, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution).