

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES), on behalf of the Water Quality Standards Advisory Committee (WQSAC), is holding an information meeting on April 27th from 10:00 am to 11:30 am in the DES auditorium in Concord, New Hampshire (NH) regarding proposed rule changes to the NH Surface Water Quality (SWQ) regulations (Env-Wq 1700). The intended audience is personnel responsible for compliance of wastewater treatment facility (WWTF) discharges with NPDES permit limits. If you are a WWTF operator, please forward this to the Public Works Director, Wastewater Superintendent, or equivalent person in your town or city.

Env-Wq 1700 applies to all surface waters (rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, wetlands, and tidal waters), and includes criteria to protect the designated uses of surface waters (such as recreation and protection of aquatic life). A current version of Env-Wq 1700 is available at <http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/legal/rules/documents/env-wq1700.pdf>. Table 1703.1 includes numeric criteria for toxic substances.

EPA issued NPDES permits for WWTFs discharging to surface waters include effluent limits that are designed to comply with NH SWQ regulations. Consequently, changes to the SWQ regulations may impact permit limits for some WWTFs when the permit is reissued. Some of the factors that influence permit effluent limits include the available dilution (which is dependent on the WWTF design flow and river flow), the ambient receiving water quality, and the concentration of pollutants in the WWTF effluent.

DES is proposing to update the toxic criteria in Table 1703.1 in accordance with EPA's latest national recommended aquatic life and human health criteria (see <http://water.epa.gov/scitech/swguidance/standards/criteria/current/index.cfm>) and possibly EPA's draft recommended human health criteria (HHC) which would replace the HHC in their current recommended criteria mentioned above (see <http://water.epa.gov/scitech/swguidance/standards/criteria/current/hhdraft.cfm>). Only if EPA finalizes the draft HHC in the next few weeks is DES likely to incorporate this criteria into the proposed regulations.

Not all criteria will change or be more stringent. Also, please note that NO CHANGES are proposed for parameters typically limited in WWTF permits such as biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), total suspended solids (TSS), pH, chlorine and bacteria. Further, DES is NOT proposing any numeric criteria for total nitrogen or phosphorus. Changes are, however, proposed for ammonia and, depending on the hardness of the surface water, the aquatic life criteria for some metals such as cadmium, copper, chromium(+3), lead, nickel, silver and zinc may also be affected. For aluminum, DES intends to specify that the criteria represents the acid soluble form (as opposed to total recoverable which would be more stringent). Most of the other toxic criteria have NOT historically resulted in permit limits for most NH WWTFs.

At the meeting on April 27th, an overview of the proposed revisions will be followed by Q & A.

If you plan on attending, please contact Gregg Comstock (email preferred) so that we can get a headcount (603-271-2983, Gregg.Comstock@des.nh.gov).

Thank you for your interest.

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