

# Public Information Exchange in Water Quality Management in the State of Maryland, USA

Prepared for  
The Study Tour on  
*Strengthening the Right to Information for  
People and the Environment*

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# Federal Clean Water Act Steps and Public Information Exchanges

## Clean Water Act Steps:

### 1. Establish *Designated Uses* of Waterbodies

*Designated Uses* are the intended uses of the waterbody, e.g., public water supply, cold water fisheries, shellfish harvesting, shipping navigation, etc. Social values and economic desires are balanced with environmental quality at this is the point in the process.

## Public Information Exchanges:

- Consider socio-economic values of the public through information exchanges.
- Public review opportunity
- Technical documentation
- Administrative record

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## Clean Water Act Steps:

2. Establish *Water Quality Criteria* to support the designated uses of Waterbodies

*Water Quality Criteria* are the physical and chemical conditions necessary to ensure the designated uses are viable. Economic and social factors are not considered, because they were considered in the previous step.

## Public Information Exchanges:

- Consider scientific and other objective information.
- Public review opportunity
- Technical documentation
- Administrative record

# Federal Clean Water Act Steps and Public Information Exchanges

## Clean Water Act Steps:

3. *Monitor Waters* to assess water quality criteria and maintain data.

## Public Information Exchanges:

- Data is available to the public.
- See Step 4 for public involvement in monitoring and data interpretation methods.

# Federal Clean Water Act Steps and Public Information Exchanges

## Clean Water Act Steps:

### 4. Identify *Impaired Waters*.

*Impaired waters* are those do not meet water quality criteria.

## Public Information Exchanges:

- Public data is solicited and considered in addition to State monitoring data.
- Data is available to the public.
- Methods for interpreting the data are part of the public review.

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## Clean Water Act Steps:

### 5. Develop *TMDLs* for Impaired *Waters*.

*TMDLs* (Total Maximum Daily Loads) are estimates of the maximum allowable pollutant load that a waterbody can assimilate and still meet water quality criteria.

## Public Information Exchanges:

- Public data is solicited and considered.
- Pre-TMDL public meeting is offered.
- Post-TMDL public meeting is offered.
- Public review of the TMDL.
- Technical Documentation
- Administrative Record.

# Federal Clean Water Act Steps and Public Information Exchanges

## Clean Water Act Steps:

### *6. TMDL Implementation.*

TMDL implementation takes many forms. Permits for waste water plants and urban stormwater are key elements.

## Public Information Exchanges:

- Draft permits often developed with public involvement.
- Technical Documentation
- Administrative Record.

# Contact Information

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