



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Map Included

DEP Invites Public Comment on Draft 2022 State Water Plan, Identifying Priorities for Management and Protection

Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today released the [draft 2022 Pennsylvania State Water Plan](#) identifying regional and statewide water resources priorities and recommending statewide and legislative actions to address those priorities. Pennsylvanians are invited to review the draft plan and provide comments on it.

"The Pennsylvania State Water Plan is a powerful tool for all Pennsylvanians working in a professional or volunteer capacity to manage or protect our waters," said DEP Acting Secretary Ramez Ziadeh. "I thank the many committee volunteers who shared their expertise to develop this robust draft plan, and encourage everyone to review it and share their thoughts. Public participation is critical to finalizing a plan that sustains Pennsylvania's invaluable water resources."

As required by the state Water Resources Planning Act of 2002, DEP collaborates with regional committees and a statewide committee to prepare the Pennsylvania State Water Plan. The plan can help legislative, governmental, industry, and community leaders make informed decisions regarding water resources. It includes recommendations from experts to inform policies, programs, and projects related to water availability, infrastructure investment, water resource protection, health and safety, and climate change adaptation.

DEP welcomes comments on the draft 2022 State Water Plan. [Comments can be made online through the DEP eComment system](#), may be emailed to ecomment@pa.gov, or can be mailed to the DEP Policy Office, Rachel Carson State Office Building, P.O. Box 2063 Harrisburg, PA 17105. All comments must include the commenter's name and address.

The deadline for comments is September 19, 2022, at 11:59 PM.

Pennsylvania has six water planning regions: the Great Lakes basin and Upper/Middle Susquehanna, Lower Susquehanna, Potomac, Ohio, and Delaware river basins. More than 100 Pennsylvanians, serving on regional committees and a statewide committee, contributed assessments and recommendations to the 2022 State Water Plan, an update to the first plan, issued in 2009.

The draft 2022 State Water Plan recommends that over 100 actions be continued, expanded on, or initiated in flood control, stormwater management, water withdrawal, legacy coal mining impacts, legacy oil and gas wells, drinking water and wastewater treatment, contaminants of emerging concern, and agricultural nonpoint source pollution.

These include recommendations for the General Assembly to consider, such as establishing water well-drilling construction standards and continued funding of effective programs such as DEP's [stormwater planning grant and reimbursement program for local governments](#).

Four watersheds are identified as Critical Water Planning Areas, where existing or future water demands threaten to exceed water availability. These are Marsh and Rock Creek watersheds (combined) in Adams County; Back Creek watershed in Fayette County; and Laurel Hill Creek watershed in Somerset and Fayette counties. Regional committees are developing Critical Area Resource Plans for these areas.

The draft 2022 State Water Plan ties a number of water management and protection recommendations to climate change mitigation and adaptation recommendations in the 2018 and 2021 [Pennsylvania Climate Action Plans](#).

For example, to address impacts of climate-related increased flooding on overburdened and vulnerable populations, the plan recommends increasing community recovery assistance after flood events. To reduce the impact of flooding on built infrastructure, the plan recommends investing in enhanced flood forecast and warning systems and updating floodplain and flood insurance rate maps.

The need to strengthen the link between land use and water resources is underscored throughout the plan. How land is used, developed, or conserved has significant impact on the availability and quality of water from our creeks, rivers, lakes, and groundwater. The plan promotes an integrated water resources management approach that can benefit all communities.

The 2022 State Water Plan outlines an implementation path that includes continued committee involvement. This will be focused on outreach and education efforts, promoting the plan's legislative priorities, and establishing measurable outcomes to target going forward.

State Water Plan committee meetings are open to public participation. For meeting information, please visit the committee pages at the [State Water Plan web site](#).

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