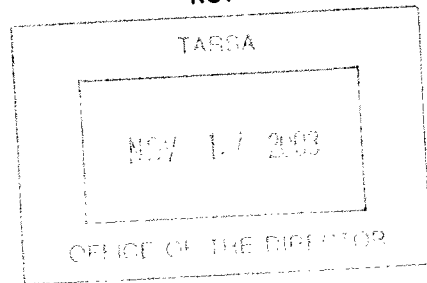




UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION III  
1650 Arch Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029

NOV 10 2003

Richard Eskin, Acting Director  
Technical and Regulatory Services Administration  
Maryland Department of the Environment  
1800 Washington Boulevard, Suite 450  
Baltimore, Maryland 21230-1718



Dear Dr. Eskin:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region III (EPA) has reviewed the Draft Final report entitled, "Water Quality Analysis of Cadmium and Lead for the Middle River in Baltimore County, Maryland," submitted by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) for final Agency review on September 22, 2003.

EPA concurs with MDE's determination that the recent data show that a total maximum daily load (TMDL) for cadmium and lead is not necessary for Middle River. Middle River was first listed by Maryland on its 1996 Section 303(d) list of water quality-limited segments as impaired by suspended sediments and nutrients. In 1998, Maryland added nickel and copper impairments for Middle River to the list. In 2002, Maryland added cadmium and lead impairments for Middle River to the list. The listings for copper and nickel were removed in 2002 based on an evaluation of the data against the freshwater criteria (i.e., versus saltwater criteria) that showed no impairments for those constituents. This water quality analysis only addresses the cadmium and lead impairments.

The water column data and sediment toxicity evaluation show that Maryland's water quality standards related to cadmium and lead are being met for this waterbody. Specifically, the data show that the freshwater aquatic life acute and chronic criteria are being met. The data from 2001 and 2002 for cadmium and lead were all found to be below the hardness-adjusted criteria for those metal species. The ranges of water column concentrations were as follows:

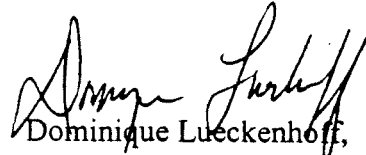
- Cadmium: nondetect to 3.38 ug/l
- Lead: 0.004 to 1.02 ug/l



If in the future evidence suggests that cadmium and/or lead from the Middle River watershed is contributing to water quality problems, then action will have to be taken.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Susan Sciarratta at 215-814-5733.

Sincerely,

  
Dominique Lueckenhoff,  
Acting Associate Director  
Water Protection Division  
Office of Watersheds

cc: James George, MDE-TARSA  
Melissa Chatham, MDE-TARSA