



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

Richard Eskin, Ph.D.  
Director, Technical and Regulatory Services Administration  
Maryland Department of the Environment  
1800 Washington Blvd., Suite 540  
Baltimore, Maryland 21230-1718

FEB 20 2009

Dear Dr. Eskin:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region III, has reviewed the report "Water Quality Analysis of Lead in Northeast River, Cecil County, Maryland," which was submitted by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) for final agency review on July 25, 2008.

EPA agrees with MDE that the current data show that a Lead TMDL is not necessary for Northeast River. Northeast River was listed by Maryland on its 1996 and 2002 Section 303(d) Lists as impaired by nutrients, suspended sediments, zinc, lead, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and impacts to biological communities. All impairments were listed for tidal waters except for impacts to biological communities, which is listed for the non-tidal region.

The monitoring data collected demonstrated that lead's concentration consistently remained below the pollutant water quality criterion. Lead concentrations ranged from 0.003  $\mu\text{g/L}$  (below detection limit) to 0.31  $\mu\text{g/L}$ . For all samples, hardness ranged from 140.25  $\text{mg/L}$  to 439.45  $\text{mg/L}$ . Lead's concentration range was well below the associated fresh water aquatic life chronic Hardness Adjusted Criteria (HAC), and did not exceed its criterion in any of the samples. Also, bottom sediment samples used for bioassay toxicity tests showed that there is no toxicity as a result of lead.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Water Quality Analysis. If you should have any questions, please contact Ms. Helene Drago, TMDL Program Manager, at 215-814-5796.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon M. Capacasa".

Jon M. Capacasa, Director  
Water Protection Division

cc: Melissa Chatham, MDE-TARSA

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**SUBJECT:** Approval of the Water Quality Analysis (WQA) of  
Lead in Northeast River, Cecil County, Maryland

**FROM:** Helene Drago, TMDL Program Manager *Helene Drago* 2/10/09  
Office of Standards, Assessment and TMDLs (3WP30)

**TO:** Jon Capacasa, Director (3WP00)  
Water Protection Division

**THRU:** *Diana Esher*  
Diana Esher, Acting Associate Director (3WP30)  
Office of Standards, Assessment and TMDLs

1. The Water Quality Analysis (WQA) for the Northeast River documented that the impairment of lead no longer exists. As such, a TMDL for this impairment is no longer necessary.
2. The WQA for the Northeast River (basin code 02-13-06-08) documented that the lead impairment no longer exists since the pollutant's concentration remained below its water quality criterion. In addition, toxicity testing showed that there is no toxicity in the sediment as a result of lead.
3. This report represents one (1) WQA.
4. There were no comments received by the Maryland Department of the Environment during the public review period.