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

SEP 23 2009

Dear Dr. Eskin:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region III, has reviewed the report *Water Quality Analysis of Eutrophication for the Seneca Creek Basin in Montgomery County, Maryland*, which was submitted by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) for final review on August 25, 2009.

EPA agrees with MDE that current data show that a nutrient Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is not necessary for the Seneca Creek watershed (MD 02140208). Seneca Creek watershed was listed by Maryland on its Section 303(d) List as impaired by nutrients (1996), sediments (1996), and impact to biological communities (2002). A TMDL for fecal bacteria was completed in 2006.

The monitoring data collected demonstrated that the Seneca Creek watershed has met all water quality standards for nutrient loadings. The data presented clearly shows that chlorophyll *a* levels and Dissolved Oxygen concentrations are meeting water quality criteria. Also, results of a Seneca Creek Biological Stressor Identification analysis did not identify nutrients as a potential stressor or indicate any significant association between current nutrient levels and the degraded biological conditions.

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,

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 Eutrophication for the Seneca Creek Basin in Montgomery County, Maryland.

FROM: Helene Drago, TMDL Program Manager
Office of Standards, Assessment and TMDLs (3WP30)

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

THRU: Larry Merrill, Acting Associate Director
Office of Standards, Assessment and TMDLs (3WP30)

1. The Water Quality Analysis (WQA) for the Seneca Creek watershed documented that the impairment of nutrients no longer exists. As such, TMDLs for this impairment are no longer necessary.

2. The WQA for the Seneca Creek watershed (MD 02140208) documented that the nutrient impairment no longer exists since the watershed does not show signs of excessive algal growth. Also, results of the Seneca Creek Biological Stressor Identification analysis did not identify nutrients as a potential stressor or indicate any significant association between current nutrient levels and the degraded biological conditions.

3. Maryland Department of the Environment received no comments during the public comment period.