



Local Government Processes in Maryland's TMDL Development Program

What You Need to Know

Below is a summary of the "Local Government Involvement Process in Maryland's TMDL Development Program". This summary is intended to identify the best way for local governments to assure their views and expertise are considered in the TMDL development process, beginning with establishing water quality standards, the foundation upon which TMDLs rest. This summary has been developed following the discussions at the TMDL Local Government Coordination Meeting, held on April 28, 1999, in Ellicott City.

Local governments play a number of important roles in TMDL development. Early in the process, local governments are invited to comment on Maryland's water quality standards and assist in the identification of waters to be included on Maryland's 303(d) list. Aside from these roles, which set the foundation for TMDL development, local governments have three broad roles directly associated with the TMDL Program. The first role concerns the development of specific TMDLs. The second role concerns the shaping of general policy associated with Maryland's TMDL Program (e.g., Coordination of State and local responses to evolving Federal policies, exploration of alternative methodologies for TMDLs, exploration of the mechanisms for TMDL implementation, etc.). The third role concerns the implementation of specific TMDLs. These roles are elaborated upon below.

First, MDE has established a framework for the involvement of local governments in the process of development of specific TMDLs. The involvement of local governments is largely a product of their interest. To ensure clear communications, each local government is encouraged to identify an individual to serve as the primary contact for all matters relating to TMDLs. Local governments are responsible for informing the TMDL Outreach Coordinator of MDE of personnel changes in this position. For each TMDL, MDE will provide advanced written notice to the primary TMDL contacts for the affected jurisdictions, solicit all readily available data, and will offer to host a technical meeting. After this initial interaction, local primary TMDL contacts are encouraged to maintain communications with MDE as the TMDL is being developed. Upon completion of the draft TMDL, the affected local jurisdiction(s) will be notified and offered a briefing intended to inform appropriate local officials about the TMDL prior to public notice. The local primary TMDL contacts are encouraged to participate as early as possible, and maintain contact with MDE during the development process to ensure a productive briefing.

Second, the general interaction of local government with Maryland's TMDL Program on broad policy issues may be conducted through the State Water Quality Advisory Committee (SWQAC). SWQAC was instituted to ensure the existence of an orderly and formal framework for meeting needs such as this. In addition, MDE recognizes the Maryland Municipal League (MML) and the Maryland Association of Counties (MACO) as valuable coordinating institutions, which may serve as forums for deliberating on general topics. Interaction on general matters may also be conducted on an individual basis between MDE staff and formally designated local primary TMDL contacts. Finally, MDE encourages various interest groups within local government (treatment works officials, planning and zoning officials, etc.) to organize among themselves and include appropriate State staff in their deliberations on the subject of TMDLs.

Third, MDE hopes to encourage local government involvement in TMDL implementation in several ways. Initially, MDE will notify each affected local primary TMDL contact in writing when EPA approves a TMDL. Next, MDE will strive for the involvement of stakeholders, including local government, in planning and executing actions that advance the goal of achieving and maintaining the TMDL. Finally, MDE intends to facilitate local government participation in implementing TMDLs by building upon existing planning tools, coordinating forums, pollution control programs, and financial assistance mechanisms that are already familiar to local governments.