



Maryland's Draft 2024 Integrated Report

What You Need to Know

What is the Integrated Report?

The Integrated Report is a biennial report that provides the information required under sections 303(d), 305(b), and 314 of the federal Clean Water Act. States, territories, and authorized tribes identify waters assessed as either meeting or not meeting water quality standards and report them in the IR using five different categories of water quality. Waters meeting standards for a given pollutant are placed in category 2 and those not meeting are placed in category 4 or 5, which are considered impaired. Impaired waters may require a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), or other alternative approach, to determine the maximum amount of a pollutant allowed in the waterbody.

Why compile an Integrated Report?

Besides being required by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the IR provides an update on the status of waterbodies and helps the State prioritize which waters should be addressed by restoration efforts and which watersheds need protection. It also provides a summary of water quality trends across the State, and reports on the status of water quality restoration efforts and initiatives throughout Maryland.

What are the most important assessment changes in 2024?

MDE conducted intensive PFAS monitoring in fish tissue to document and prevent risk to these harmful chemicals. This led to 36 new Category 5 listings for PFOS in fish tissue, one of the more widely studied PFAS compounds, on the 2024 IR. WPRPP has made TMDL development for these 36 impaired listings a high priority which will reduce future PFOS impacts and improve already affected water bodies. Additionally, as trend analyses documented increased surface water temperature across the state, MDE added 196 new Category 5 temperature impairments in Class III and III-P coldwater streams through the most comprehensive temperature assessment to date. These trends and listings threaten the persistence of coldwater obligate species and provide strong justification for moving forward with temperature TMDLs. There are also 9 new category 5 bacteria impairment listings for designated bathing beaches that demonstrate more chronic bacteria issues that need further investigation.

Alongside these new listings, Maryland added a significant number of category 2 listings across many pollutants. Thus, new impaired listings do not necessarily suggest deteriorating conditions of Maryland waters but instead represent a more comprehensive inventory of water quality.



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There were also notable delistings in the 2024 IR when previously impaired waters for a given pollutant are now meeting water quality standards. There were 6 new delistings for PCBs in fish tissue and 2 new delistings for mercury in fish tissue. Finally, there were 22 new delistings for sulfates due to an updated conservative threshold based on toxicity studies.

What are other notable highlights in this IR cycle?

The 2024 IR includes the 303(d) 2025-2032 Vision, which provides a long-term vision for assessment, restoration, and protection under the Clean Water Act Section 303(d). Maryland's 2025-2032 Vision focuses on TMDL prioritization for current impairments. This Vision will go out for public review and comment with the IR. MDE also continued to make significant efforts to incorporate community-based data in assessments through the partnership with the Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative (CMC). The 2024 IR utilized more community-based data in assessments than ever before and incorporated high-quality, tidal, dissolved oxygen data from three groups into Chesapeake Bay assessments.

MDE is working to incorporate Environmental Justice (EJ) considerations into all programs and projects including the IR and TMDLs. MDE's EJ screening tool was used in the 2024 IR process for planning and prioritization strategies. This included selecting which lakes to monitor in 2024-2025 as well as the prioritization list for TMDL development in the 2025-2032 Vision.

Finally, for the 2024 IR, MDE held a separate public comment period for the updated IR assessment methodologies from October 11, 2023- November 13, 2023. There were updates to the Toxics- Fish Tissue, Temperature, and Bacteria assessment methodologies, which are also the parameters of some of the main assessment changes for this cycle.

How can the public get involved?

There are several opportunities for the public to get involved in IR development and public review. MDE is accepting public comments for the Draft 2024 IR from May 31, 2024 to July 1, 2024. In addition, MDE is hosting a virtual informational public meeting at 6pm on June 13, 2024.

Please visit MDE's website for more information about submitting water quality data, providing public comments, or attending the informational public meeting for Maryland's Integrated Report at: <https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/water/TMDL/Integrated303dReports/Pages/2024IR.aspx>. Please contact Becky Monahan at Becky.Monahan@maryland.gov with any questions.