



# Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Monday, May 13, 2024

## DEM ISSUES DRAFT IMPAIRED WATERS LIST AND OPENS PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD, HOSTING MAY 22 WORKSHOP TO DISCUSS FINDINGS OF STATEWIDE WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND TMDL PRIORITIZATION

PROVIDENCE, RI – The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) is soliciting comments on the state's Impaired Waters List and will hold a virtual public workshop on Wednesday, May 22 to review statewide water quality findings. Updates to the State's approach to water quality restoration study prioritization will also be presented. Representatives from DEM's [Office of Water Resources](#) (OWR) will describe the state's water quality assessment process, general findings of this assessment including new waterbody impairments added to the Impaired Waters List. The state's priorities under the US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) [Vision 2.0 Strategy](#) for completing the federally mandated water quality restoration studies known as total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) will also be discussed.

The virtual public workshop being held on Wednesday, May 22 will present findings of the full statewide assessment of water quality conditions, including the draft Impaired Waters List. Pre-registration is required. All participants will be muted upon joining the meeting. Following a presentation on the assessment results, DEM will receive questions via voice or chat. To ask a question following the workshop presentation, participants should click the "Raise Hand" button on the screen or type into the chat, which will be monitored.

**WHAT:** Virtual Public Workshop to Discuss Findings of Statewide Water Quality Assessment

**WHEN:** Wednesday, May 22, 3:30 – 5 PM

**WHERE:** Microsoft Teams Meeting: <https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/0785c45e-1be8-423f-9e83-815ab30fd392@52ca6a54-4465-4635-bff3-65d0a8412288>

Any individual requiring a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in the meeting should contact Colin Millar at (401) 537-4256, or the Department via R.I. Relay 711, at least 7 business days prior to the meeting.

DEM's Office of Water Resources assesses the quality of the state's surface waters by comparing available monitoring data against the state's established water quality criteria to determine whether the waters are suitable for such uses as swimming, fish/shellfish consumption, and aquatic life. The results of this

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assessment are presented in the state's Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report (Integrated Report), which documents the overall quality of the state's waters. It includes a five-part Integrated List which provides available information on each of the state's lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, and estuarine waters. The process of conducting the assessment is documented in the Consolidated Assessment and Listing Methodology at: <https://dem.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur861/files/2023-02/calm24.pdf>

As part of the process, DEM identifies those surface waters that do not meet water quality criteria for which a water quality restoration study known as a TMDL is required in accordance with the federal [Clean Water Act](#) (CWA). These impaired waters are placed on the state's [303\(d\) List](#), named for the CWA section that establishes the requirement (aka Category 5 List), which also establishes a schedule for development of the federally mandated studies. The draft 303(d) List is available for public comment online on DEM's website at: <https://dem.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur861/files/2024-05/303d24.pdf>

For informational purposes, the full five-part draft Integrated List is also available online on DEM's website at: <https://dem.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur861/files/2024-05/irrc1820.pdf>

All interested parties are invited to submit written comments on the draft 303(d) List by Monday, June 10 to Colin Millar at [colin.millar@dem.ri.gov](mailto:colin.millar@dem.ri.gov) or via mail to Colin Millar, DEM Office of Water Resources, 235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908.

The TMDL Vision framework was intended to help foster integration across 303(d) program areas and focus EPA and State efforts to advance the effectiveness of the federal CWA Section 303(d) Program. Beginning in 2024, states and territories will begin implementation of the EPA's 2022 – 2032 Vision for the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) Program (referred to as "2022 Vision" or "Vision 2.0"). The draft document for Rhode Island's Vision 2.0 priorities is available here: <https://dem.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur861/files/2024-05/tmdl-ri-vision.pdf>

All interested parties are invited to provide feedback on the draft Rhode Island's TMDL Vision 2.0 Framework document by Wednesday June 10 to Jane Sawyers at [jane.sawyers@dem.ri.gov](mailto:jane.sawyers@dem.ri.gov) or via mail to Jane Sawyers, DEM Office of Water Resources, 235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908.

For more information on DEM programs and initiatives, visit [www.dem.ri.gov](http://www.dem.ri.gov). Follow [DEM on Facebook](#), Twitter (@RhodeIslandDEM), or Instagram (@rhodeisland.dem) for timely updates.

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