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Subject: Proposed Amendments to 25 Pa. Code Chapter 95 Establishing Effluent Standards for New Sources of High-TDS Wastewaters

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To the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection:

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY REVIEW COMMISSION

I am writing in support of regulations to reduce the risk that total dissolved solids (TDS) pose to our rivers and streams. Pennsylvania's rivers and streams provide billions of dollars of direct and indirect economic benefit to the Commonwealth's families, farms, and industries. Recent developments have shown such benefits to be threatened to a greater extent now than perhaps at any time since the clean water laws were strengthened in the late 1960s in response to then-existing pervasive industrial pollution.

These regulations are needed to address this threat, and to protect our waterways:

- In late 2008, high TDS levels in the waters of the Monongahela River south of Pittsburgh threatened to shut down industries that are dependent on the River's fresh-water for their operations, and made household water undrinkable for approximately 330,000 people in the southwestern part of the state.
- in August and September 2009, the discharge of high-TDS wastewater into Dunkard Creek, a tributary of the Mon located mostly in Greene County, from coal mines in West Virginia and Pennsylvania wiped out virtually all aquatic life in that stream.
- Over the next several years, increased development of the natural gas-bearing shales in Pennsylvania threatens to exacerbate this problem in rivers and streams throughout the state.

But the rules should go even further than they do. The rules should eliminate the threshold at which these standards apply so that treatment is done consistently no matter how big or small the amount of wastewater. In addition, the proposed effluent standards should be applied to existing polluters when their permits are renewed or modified, as well as to new sources of pollution.

I fully support DEP's efforts to establish effluent standards for new sources of wastewaters containing high concentrations of total dissolved solids and urge the DEP to go even further in protecting our waterways.

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Thanks for your consideration.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

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