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Lehigh County Authority

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Public Comment:

Proposed Rulemaking [25 PA Code Ch. 109] Safe Drinking Water; Revised Total Coliform Rule [45 PA.B. 5943]

The Lehigh County Authority (LCA) appreciates this opportunity to offer our comments and concerns regarding the proposed regulation.

In general, we recommend that the US EPA revisions to the Total Coliform Rule be followed as closely as possible by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

Detailed Comments

PA DEP: 109.301(3)(ii)(E) A community water system serving 1,000 people or fewer or a noncommunity water system may be required to begin monitoring on an alternate schedule established by the Department. This determination will be made based on the results of a special monitoring evaluation performed during a sanitary survey. The system shall continue monitoring on the alternate schedule until otherwise notified by the Department.

LCA: The summary of regulatory requirements notes that this proposed addition reflects 40 CRF 141.854(c)(2), however this is what is written in 40 CFR, § 141.854 Routine monitoring requirements for non-community water systems serving 1,000 or fewer people using only ground water. As you can see, the federal regulation does not apply to community water systems. We suggest the federal rule be followed.

PA DEP: 109.701(a)(5) Siting Plan.

LCA: There is no mention of flexibility or allowing a standard operating procedure to determine the best location for check samples. In large water systems with multiple sources and storage facilities, the most representative upstream and downstream sample locations may not be as simple as counting five connections on either side of the original sample site. The federal rule allows the states to accept alternate repeat sample locations. We urge PA DEP to grant water suppliers this option, if they have the capability to best verify and determine the extent of potential contamination of the distribution system area based on specific situations (from 141.853(a)(5)(i).

Response to EQB Questions

Why alternative repeat monitoring locations should be allowed.

We are in favor of plan flexibility, including the use of an SOP. We support the utilization of available technology to determine the most representative check sample locations for larger water systems with more complex distribution systems.

How a PWS would demonstrate that an alternative repeat monitoring location represents the pathway for contamination that led to the original coliform-positive sample in the distribution system.

LCA: Proof would be a positive check sample or data that demonstrate a compromised system at the collection time of the positive sample.

Whether only fixed alternative repeat monitoring locations should be allowed or if a standard operating procedure for choosing locations may also be allowed and why.

LCA: We believe a standard operating procedure should be allowed for repeat monitoring location selection. It would allow the flexibility needed by suppliers to find the most representative sample site locations.

Whether alternative repeat monitoring locations must be submitted under the signature of a certified operator.

LCA: We suggest a qualified system official typically responsible for ensuring the proper collection of samples. That person could be an operator, system manager, engineer, laboratory manager or quality manager.

Whether alternative repeat monitoring locations must be submitted under the seal of a professional engineer.

LCA: No, we do not believe this is necessary. However, if a system has the resources, a PE's seal of approval would be a plus. In addition, if a system has a model, undoubtedly engineers were involved with the creation and use of the model. In essence, their approval has already been given for the accuracy of the model.

Whether alternative locations should only be allowed for systems serving greater than 9,999 people.

LCA: Perhaps a limitation isn't needed. Logic dictates that larger systems would have the reason—complex distribution systems—and the resources to obtain technology to assist in the selection of best possible locations to collect repeat samples which may be out of the realm of the typical 5 upstream/5 downstream locations. These samples would be alternate repeat sample locations.

Electronic reporting of assessment forms

Section 109.705(b)(2) is proposed to be replaced with language requiring a PWS to complete a Level 1 or a Level 2 assessment and submit it to the Department within 30 days of triggering the assessment. This proposed amendment reflects 40 CFR 141.859(b)(3)(i). The Board would like to receive comments regarding interest in submitting these forms electronically.

LCA: Electronic submission of assessment forms would be preferred because it can speed up the process and provide easy access to data for all parties. Greenport is fast becoming a much utilized vehicle for managing data requiring submission to the Department. Adding the assessment forms through Greenport seems like a logical decision that would allow for efficient tracking.