



MOVING WATER FORWARD

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September 22, 2020

Environmental Quality Board
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RegComments.epa.gov

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SEP 23 2020

Independent Regulatory
Review Commission

**RE: Comments on Water Quality Standard for Manganese and
Implementation #7-553; IRRC #3260**

Dear Environmental Quality Board:

The National Association of Water Companies (NAWC www.nawc.org) represents all aspects of the private water service industry including ownership of regulated drinking water and wastewater utilities. NAWC-PA member companies provide safe and adequate drinking water service to over 3.1 million Pennsylvanians in 492 communities in 39 counties. In addition, NAWC-PA member companies provide wastewater service to approximately 195,000 Pennsylvanians in 34 communities across nine counties.

The NAWC-PA appreciates the opportunity to comment on this important proposed rulemaking for our member companies and their customers.

NAWC-PA **supports** the proposed rulemaking to amend Chapters 93 and 96 (relating to water quality standards; and water quality standards implementation).

Specifically, NAWC-PA **supports** the proposed amendments to delete manganese from Table 3 in § 93.7' (relating to specific water quality criteria) and adding manganese to Table 5 in § 93.8c" (relating to human health and aquatic life criteria for toxic substances).

Essentially, the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) is proposing a new numeric human health criterion for manganese of 0.3 mg/L in Chapter 93.8 - Water Quality Criteria for Toxic Substances and would delete the existing 1 mg/L standard because it is not protective of human health. The new proposed 0.3 mg/L toxic health standard would apply to all discharges going into surface waters, just as the existing 1 mg/L standard.

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) reviewed the effects of manganese on human health and determined that current science shows manganese is harmful to human health as a possible nervous system toxin with

implications to early childhood development at levels that are less than the threshold levels that impact aquatic life.

DEP believes the new proposed 0.3 mg/L toxic health standard will protect human health from the neurotoxicological effects of manganese, as well as ensure adequate protection of all water uses. Both the Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC)ⁱⁱⁱ and Small Water Systems Technical Assistance Center (TAC) Advisory Board^{iv} voted to support the 0.3 mg/L standard proposed by DEP, while acknowledging the 2017 law moving the point of compliance.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) expects states to address levels above 0.3 mg/L because the EPA Health Advisory includes a 10-day limit of 0.3 mg/L for infants. EPA also expects states to require corrective actions, including Public Notification (PN).

Therefore, the DEP is in the process of updating its guidance document "*Situations Requiring One-Hour Reporting to the Department of Environmental Protection*"^v to clarify that a water supplier shall notify DEP within 1 hour of discovery if there is an exceedance of an EPA Health Advisory for a secondary or unregulated contaminant in the finished water including:

"Manganese: Manganese has a lifetime advisory level of 0.3 mg/L, and a 1-day and 10-day health advisory level of 1 mg/L. For bottle-fed infants younger than six months, EPA has established a 10-day health advisory level of 0.3 mg/L."

The EQB is also proposing for public comment, two alternatives for a point of compliance with the manganese water quality standard:

1. the point of all existing or planned surface potable water supply withdrawals; or
2. **all surface waters (that is, near the point of discharge).**

However, the proposed amendments, set forth in Annex A, support both alternatives.

NAWC-PA supports maintaining the current point of compliance for manganese, in all surface waters (that is near the point of discharge), as stated in § 96.3 (c).^{vi}

Water suppliers have been greatly concerned with the legislative provision included in the Administrative Code (Act 40 of 2017) to require the EQB to set a water quality standard for manganese. Act 40 would shift the burden for treating manganese discharges from mine sites and other sources from those polluting the water to those using the water, like public water suppliers. The consequence would put the entire burden of meeting the manganese standard on water suppliers at a significant cost, as the 1 mg/L standard is **20 times** the level of manganese that water suppliers can have in their water supplies (.05 mg/L) in accordance with EPA and DEP's secondary maximum contaminant levels (SMCLs).^{vii} Pennsylvania enforces SMCLs, as they assist public water systems in managing their drinking water for aesthetic considerations, such as taste, color, and odor complaints. At relatively low concentrations (0.02 mg/L or greater), manganese can cause discolored water (usually black or dark red/brown), staining of laundry and plumbing fixtures and increased turbidity. At higher levels, manganese can create a metallic taste in water (0.1 mg/L or greater). These are significant concerns for both water customers and water suppliers.

Therefore, water suppliers monitor for manganese in their source water to make sure they can properly treat it before it becomes a problem. Moving the point of compliance for manganese would result in higher levels of manganese in the source water causing water systems to experience increases in monitoring costs and increases in treatment costs due to the need to modify existing treatment processes or to provide additional treatment. For example, DEP staff informed the WRAC that 280 of the 340 surface water treatment plants in the state would have to evaluate whether to make treatment changes if the manganese compliance point were moved without the addition of a stricter standard upstream.^{viii}

Finally, it is also important to note that manganese does not degrade – **dilution is NOT the solution** – so it must be addressed through treatment or mitigation at the point of discharge. Water suppliers rely on source water protection to provide safe and adequate drinking water to their customers.

Even the 0.3 mg/L standard proposed by the EQB would still be significant for water suppliers who also have a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, as they must be in compliance for manganese when they filter backwash and discharge under their permit. However, meeting the standard in their NPDES permit would not be as costly to water suppliers as it would if the Act 40 change to 1 mg/l. at the point of water supply intake was implemented.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed rulemaking.

Very truly yours,



Erik A. Ross
Registered Lobbyist, NAWC-PA

ⁱ 25 Pa Code Chapter 93.7

http://www.pacodeandbulletin.gov/Display/pacode?file=secure/pacode/data/025/chapter93/s93.7.html&d_reduce

ⁱⁱ 25 Pa Code Chapter 93.8c

http://www.pacodeandbulletin.gov/Display/pacode?file=secure/pacode/data/025/chapter93/s93.8c.html&d_reduce

ⁱⁱⁱ Minutes of the July 25, 2019 Meeting of the Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC)

http://files.dep.state.pa.us/PublicParticipation_Advisory%20Committees/AdvCommPortall/files/WRAC_2019_103019/DraftMinutes07.25.19.pdf

^{iv} Minutes of the August 8, 2019 Meeting Small Water Systems Technical Assistance Center (TAC) Advisory Board

http://files.dep.state.pa.us/PublicParticipation_Advisory%20Committees/AdvCommPortall/files/TAC_2019_November14_draft%20Minutes_Aug%20%202019%20TAC%20meeting.pdf

^v Situations Requiring One-Hour Reporting to the Department of Environmental Protection

http://files.dep.state.pa.us/PublicParticipation_Advisory%20Committees/AdvCommPortall/files/TAC_2020_July_DRAFT%2016D%20Jul2020%20Meeting.pdf

^{vi} 25 Pa Code Chapter 96.3

http://www.pacodeandbulletin.gov/Display/pacode?file=secure/pacode/data/025/chapter96/s96.3.html&d_reduce

^{vii} USEPA, Secondary Drinking Water Standards: Guidance for Nuisance Chemicals

<https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/secondary-drinking-water-standards-guidance-nuisance-chemicals>

^{viii} “Pa. DEP to propose stricter manganese standard as studies suggest risks to children,” Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 9/23/2019

<https://www.post-gazette.com/business/powersource/2019/09/23/Pennsylvania-DEP-water-manganese-standard-health-coal-pollution-rules/stories/201909230048>