

**REGION 3**

PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103

March 14, 2025



The Honorable Jessica Shirley,
Chairperson, Environmental Quality Board
16th Floor, Rachel Carson State Office Building
400 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Chairperson Shirley:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the proposed rulemaking package amending Chapter 93 (relating to Water Quality Standards) to update the designated uses of nearly 489 stream miles, affording these surface waters the appropriate level of protection. The proposed rule, "Water Quality Standards; Class A Stream Redesignations", was published for public comment in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin* on February 1, 2025. In accordance with the Commonwealth's antidegradation regulation, at 25 Pa. Code §93.4b(a)(2)(ii), these streams are classified as Class A wild trout streams and, therefore, are being afforded the High-Quality designated use.

The EPA commends the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) in its continuing efforts to upgrade streams into its Special Protection Waters Program. The EPA appreciates PADEP's coordination throughout the development of this rulemaking, and as a result, the EPA has no comments. Note that this letter is strictly for the Board and PADEP's consideration and does not constitute approval or disapproval decisions under CWA §303(c), or determination by the EPA Administrator under CWA §303(c)(4)(B) and 40 CFR §131.22(b) that revised or new WQS are necessary to meet the requirements of the CWA.

EPA will be providing a copy of this letter to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) so that the USFWS may identify any other recommendations for PADEP to consider. We will notify PADEP of any recommendations raised by the USFWS. This coordination with the USFWS will help to facilitate EPA's CWA Section 303(c) action and fulfillment of EPA's obligations under the Endangered Species Act once this rulemaking is finalized and submitted to EPA.

EPA appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on this proposed rulemaking and is happy to assist PADEP, as necessary, to complete this regulation revision. If you have any questions concerning the matter please contact me at (215) 814-5144, or have your staff contact Charlie Brown, staff contact for the Standards and TMDLs Section, at (215) 814-2782.

Sincerely,

Jessica Martinsen, Chief
Standards and TMDLs Section

cc: Michael Lookenbill (PADEP)