

WSR 25-05-079

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

[Filed February 18, 2025, 10:28 a.m.]

The department of ecology (ecology) is starting a triennial review of chapter 173-201A WAC, Water quality standards for surface waters of the state of Washington. During this review, we are looking for feedback on our priorities for how we should consider updating the water quality standards over the next three years.

As part of this review, we invite you to comment on our 2025-2027 triennial review draft workplan. This plan outlines our actions from 2025 through 2027 to update the surface water quality standards. We also welcome feedback on any parts of the water quality standards in chapter 173-201A WAC. We are holding an informational webinar and public hearing to talk about our draft plan and listen to your feedback.

What is a triennial review? Section 303 (c)(1) of the federal Clean Water Act (act) requires that we regularly hold public hearings to review state water quality standards. This process is called a triennial review and is intended to ensure that state water quality standards meet the requirements of the act and the needs of the state. The triennial review is not a rule making. Instead, this effort helps inform what rule makings and other actions ecology should consider to keep the water quality standards current with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) act recommendations and state priorities.

What does chapter 173-201A WAC do? The state's water quality standards, chapter 173-201A WAC, set water quality criteria in lakes, rivers, and marine water to protect beneficial uses, such as swimming and fishing. They also set conditions to protect high-quality water. The water quality standards are implemented through permits and other regulatory mechanisms under the act. They are also used to identify polluted waterbodies and set levels for water cleanup.

Documents for review: You can view our draft work plan and other related materials on ecology's water quality standards web page at <https://ecology.wa.gov/Water-Shorelines/Water-quality/Water-quality-standards/Updates-to-the-standards>.

How to comment: We are accepting comments from February 25, 2025, at 12:00 a.m., until April 22, 2025, at 11:59 p.m.

Comment online: Send us comments using our eComments form (preferred method) at <https://wq.ecology.commentinput.com?id=FMCVcP54g>.

Comment by mail: Marla Koberstein, Department of Ecology, Water Quality Program, P.O. Box 47600, Olympia, WA 98504-7600.

Comment during the online public hearing: April 15, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. Register for the hearing at <https://waecy-wa-gov.zoom.us/meeting/register/oLw0f8aFTdSG6wGgWT9pmQ>.

Participate by phone (audio only): 1-253-205-0468, Meeting ID 886 2821 9414.

The hearing will begin with a short presentation on our surface water quality standards and draft work plan, after which we will answer questions. Following the presentation, we will begin the formal hearing where you can provide formal comment. The hearing will conclude once everyone who wants to comment has had the opportunity to do so.

Hearings offered via online webinar allow individuals to participate via computer or mobile device.

Next steps: After the close of comment period, we will publish a response to comments and final work plan, which we will submit to the EPA for review. We will post these documents on our water quality

standards web page at <https://ecology.wa.gov/Water-Shorelines/Water-quality/Water-quality-standards/Updates-to-the-standards>.

Questions: Contact Marla Koberstein at marla.koberstein@ecy.wa.gov, or 360-628-6376 for any questions.