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Clean Water Act: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Announces Draft Technical Support Document/Default Values (Water Quality Parameters – Fresh Water Copper BLM)

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The United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) announced in a February 16th Federal Register Notice that the availability of a Draft Technical Support Document titled: *Recommended Estimates for Missing Water Quality Parameters for Application in EPA’s Biotic Ligand Model* (“Document”). See 81 Fed. Reg. 7784.

EPA notes that in 2007 it published updated criteria for freshwater copper using the Biotic Ligand Model (“BLM”) which is a bioavailability model that relies on ten water quality input parameters to estimate copper criteria protective of aquatic life in freshwater.

The federal agency states that the draft *Document* summarizes data analysis approaches it used to develop recommendations for default values for water quality parameters used in the Freshwater Copper BLM when data are lacking. EPA notes that:

These default values may also be used to fill in missing water quality input parameters in the application of other metal BLM models as well, when data are lacking.

The current Clean Water Act Section 304(a) criteria recommendation for Freshwater Copper is stated to rely on implementation of the BLM model. It is also noted that:

The model requires 10 inputs to determine the criteria. This technical support document provides default values for 8 of the 10 parameters, where site-specific data are not available, and thereby facilitates the use of the BLM model. The document describes the methods used to estimate missing parameters.

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