



Walter Wright, Jr.
wwright@mwlaw.com
(501) 688.8839

2023 Triennial Review/Arkansas Water Quality Standards: Arkansas Department of Energy & Environment - Division of Environmental Quality Schedules Stakeholder Workgroup Meetings

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The Arkansas Department of Energy & Environment - Division of Environmental Quality (“DEQ”) announced it is initiating its 2023 Triennial Review of Arkansas’s Water Quality Standards (“WQS”).

The WQS are found in Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission Rule 2.

DEQ states it will hold a series of stakeholder workgroups to discuss the 2023 Triennial Review.

The Clean Water requires states and authorized tribes to periodically review and, as appropriate, adopt new or revised water quality standards (“WQS”) to meet the requirement of the Clean Water Act. They must submit any new or revised WQS resulting from such a review to the EPA for review and approval or disapproval under Clean Water Act Section 303(c). This process is known as the Triennial Review. It must be undertaken with public notice and comment opportunities.

Section 303 of the Clean Water Act requires that each state develop WQS for jurisdictional waters of the United States within their borders. They establish the water quality goals for a specific waterbody and also serve as a regulatory basis for the development of water-quality based effluent limits and strategies for individual point source discharges. WQS consists of three parts:

1. The designated use of a waterbody;
2. the water quality criteria that are necessary to protect existing uses and to attain the beneficial uses designated by the state; and
3. an antidegradation statement or policy to protect existing uses in high quality water.

Section 303 specifies the adoption of WQS as primarily the responsibility of the states and tribes. The states must adopt uses consistent with Clean Water Act objectives and water quality criteria sufficient to protect the chosen uses. However, EPA is required to ensure that the state WQS meet the minimum requirements of the Clean Water Act. Therefore, the Clean Water Act regulations provide for EPA review of any state WQS changes.

DEQ states that stakeholder workgroups will be held in the Commission Room at its headquarters in North Little Rock. A meeting will be held on March 31, 202, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. with a break for lunch. It further states that meetings will be held as needed.

DEQ's notice also notes:

Although specific organizations will be limited to specific representatives, should additional persons want to attend, they are welcome to observe the workgroup meetings, which will be open to the public. Also, any member of the public is welcome to raise questions or concerns at the meeting through any participating workgroup member.

Additional information regarding the program and the meeting can be found [here](#).