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2023 Triennial Review/Arkansas Water Quality Standards: Arkansas Department of Energy & Environment - Division of Environmental Quality Schedules May 19th Stakeholder Workgroup Meeting

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The Arkansas Department of Energy & Environment – Division of Environmental Quality (“DEQ”) announced the date of May 19th for its second stakeholder meeting addressing the 2023 Triennial Review of Arkansas’s Water Quality Standards (“WQS”).

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

DEQ is holding a series of stakeholder workgroups to discuss the 2023 Triennial Review.

The Clean Water Act requires states and authorized tribes to periodically review and, as appropriate, adopt new or revised 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.

The May 19th stakeholder workgroup meeting will be from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at DEQ headquarters, 5301 Northshore Drive, North Little Rock, AR 72118.

A copy of the agenda for the May 19th meeting and additional meeting can be found [here](#).