



Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Tuesday, January 18, 2022

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DEM ISSUES DRAFT IMPAIRED WATERS LIST AND OPENS PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD WITH WORKSHOP DISCUSSING FINDINGS OF STATEWIDE WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENT ON JAN. 25, 2022

PROVIDENCE, RI – The Department of Environmental Management (DEM) is soliciting comments on the state's impaired waters list and will hold a virtual public workshop next week to review statewide water quality findings. A virtual public workshop will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 25, 2022, to present findings of the full statewide assessment of water quality conditions including the draft impaired waters list.

WHAT: Virtual Public Workshop to Discuss Findings of Statewide Water Quality Assessment

WHEN: Tuesday, January 25, 2022, at 3PM

WHERE: Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4104398151>

Meeting ID: 410 439 8151

To join the public hearing using your phone for audio, click on "Join by Phone" and follow the information on the screen to dial in. All participants will be muted upon joining the meeting. Following a presentation on the results, DEM will take questions and comments via voice or chat. To make a comment during the hearing, participants should click the "Raise Hand" button on the screen or type into the chat, which will be monitored.

At the workshop, DEM representatives will describe the state's water quality assessment process, general findings of this assessment including new waterbody impairments added to the impaired waters list and the proposed removal of others. The state's priorities for completing the federally mandated water quality restoration studies also will be discussed.

All interested parties are invited to submit written comments on the draft impaired waters list by Friday, Feb. 18, to [Heidi Travers](mailto:Heidi.Travers@dem.ri.gov) or via mail to Heidi Travers, DEM, Office of Water Resources, 235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908.

DEM's Office of Water Resources assesses the quality of the state's surface waters by comparing available monitoring data against the state's established water quality criteria to determine whether the waters are suitable for such uses as swimming, fish/shellfish consumption, and aquatic life. The results of this assessment are presented in the state's Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report (Integrated Report), which documents the overall quality of the state's waters. It includes a five-part integrated list that provides available information on each of the state's lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, and

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estuarine waters. The process of conducting the assessment is documented in the consolidated assessment and listing methodology on our [website](#).

As part of the process, DEM identifies surface waters that do not meet water quality criteria for which a water quality restoration study known as a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is required in accordance with the federal Clean Water Act. These impaired waters are placed on the state's 303(d) list, named for the Clean Water Act section that establishes the requirement, which also establishes a schedule for development of the federally mandated studies. The draft 303(d) list is available on-line on DEM's [website](#).

DEM also has identified those waterbody impairments that can be removed from the list of impaired waters because available monitoring data show that water quality criteria are now being met. Documentation of the data and supporting information justifying removal of waterbody impairments can be found in Rhode Island's 2022 de-listing document, also available [online](#).

Among the waterbodies showing improved water quality and proposed for removal of an impairment from the impaired waters list is the Pawtuxet River Main Stem where water quality improvements are the result of stringent permitting and investments in pollution abatement infrastructure and practices. Other waterbodies targeted for removal include waters where recent data indicates that dissolved lead has decreased. The full five-part draft Integrated list is also available on-line on DEM's website [here](#).

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