



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



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July 17, 2017

Ralph Abele
Chief Water Quality Branch
United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region 1
5 Post Office Square Suite 100
Boston, MA 02109-3912

RE: Maine's 2016 § 303(d) list and Integrated Water Quality Report

Dear Ralph,

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection hereby submits our final draft 2016 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) as required of §§ 305(b), 303(d) and 314 of the Clean Water Act, and in fulfillment of the reporting requirements of 38 M.R.S. § 464(3)(A) of the State of Maine's Water Classification Program.

Descriptions of the listing methods used by the Department are presented in Chapter 4. Specific surface waterbody attainment and impairment assignments are found in the Appendices (a separate document and electronic file). The appendices are broken into four waterbody types: rivers/streams, lakes, wetlands, and estuarine/marine waters.

Over the 2012 and 2014 reporting cycles, Maine DEP has fallen behind on timely submittals for the Integrated Report (IR). In order to catch up, the Department compiled an abbreviated 2016 Report, in which only assessments for lakes/ponds and wetlands were updated based on two years' worth of data; for rivers/streams and estuarine/marine waters, assessments were updated for only a few select waterbodies¹, also based on 2013-14 data. Most of the remaining portions of the 2016 IR show the content of the 2014 IR unaltered, with the exception of the following:

- The Public Participation section in Chapter 2 was updated to reflect 2016 IR information.
- Table 2-1 and summary tables in Chapters 4 and 8 were updated as appropriate.
- A section describing the USEPA's '303(d) Vision' was inserted in Chapter 3. Assessments for all waters that are part of Maine's implementation of the Vision were reviewed and updated as necessary.
- Many river/stream segments, predominantly in Categories 1 and 2, were reviewed for accuracy. As a result of the review, several segments were newly mapped, their mapping was corrected, or they were split into new segments. Those changes are noted in Appendix II.

¹ Waters for which DEP received new outside data and those for which the 2014 IR indicated that an update would be provided in the 2016 cycle.

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- Staff contacts were updated as appropriate, even if the information presented was not updated.

In the 2018 IR, all content will be updated based on either two years' worth of data (2015-16), or four years' worth (2013-16), as appropriate. The Department intends to complete the 2018 Report on time, i.e. by April 1, 2018.

Summary of Significant Findings

- In August 2016, the USEPA approved the Maine Statewide Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for Nonpoint Source Pollution and consequently 21 river and stream assessment units (AUs) with aquatic life use impairments are moved from Category 5-A to Category 4-A. One stream AU is added to Category 3 for a potential impairment in aquatic communities. Two AUs are added to Category 5-A for confirmed impairments in aquatic communities. One of these AUs was previously in Category 4-A. Efforts have continued to newly map river and stream AUs or correct existing mapping; this work has resulted in increases in the mileages in Categories 1 and 2.
- Lakes and ponds of Maine were stable (as a percentage of total assessed waters) with respect to their listing categories during the 2014 to 2016 time frame as no lakes were moved among the attainment Categories.
- All freshwaters in Maine continue to be listed for an impaired Fish Consumption Use caused by mercury from sources beyond the region. These waters are in Category 4-A because of USEPA's 2007 approval of a Regional Mercury TMDL. Many mainstem river segments are listed in Category 5-D for non-attainment of the fish consumption use due to legacy PCB contamination of fish tissue.
- Maine DEP began development of a biological monitoring and assessment program for freshwater wetlands in 1998. A provisional linear discriminant model to assess freshwater wetland macroinvertebrate communities has been developed and will become the basis for wetland-specific numeric criteria once implemented through rule-making. For the current cycle, attainment decisions are based on expert judgment of Department biologists using statutory narrative aquatic life use criteria. In the 2016 Report, one wetland is added to Category 1 and two wetlands are added to Category 2 based on data showing attainment of narrative aquatic life use criteria. Three wetlands are added to Category 3 based on data indicating potential impairment. Two wetlands are moved to Category 4-A due to inclusion in approved TMDLs; one of these waters is also newly listed in Category 4-C due to flow regime alterations.
- No estuarine or marine waters are changing their listing category. However, the 2014 listing categories for three AUs were reviewed and the findings of the review are presented in the relevant text sections (see pages 80-82 of the Report).
- The Groundwater Program is described in Chapter 6. A significant portion of Maine's groundwater may be threatened by contamination, particularly in unforested areas, which comprise approximately 11% of the State. Important sources of groundwater contamination in Maine include disposal activities such as landfills and septic systems, leaking storage facilities, agriculture, and sites contaminated by hazardous materials spills, winter salt applications, or previously unregulated activities.

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We greatly appreciate the outstanding support and professionalism of Jennie Bridge and Meredith Timony, and their accurate and insightful reviews of the Report. Their attention to detail was a great help to my staff and has significantly improved the final version we are now submitting for final review.

We look forward to USEPA's review of this final version of Maine's 2016 Integrated Report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Kuhns" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Kuhns, Director
Bureau of Water Quality

Cc: Don Witherill, Director, Division of Environmental Assessment (DEA)
Susanne Meidel, Water Quality Standards Coordinator (DEA)
Meredith Timony, USEPA Region 1
Diane Switzer, USEPA Region 1
Greg Dain, USEPA Region 1

