

STATE OF ALASKA

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
DIVISION OF WATER
WATER QUALITY STANDARDS, ASSESSMENT AND
RESTORATION PROGRAMS**

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

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Dear Interested Alaskan,

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is interested in seeking your views about revisions to the Alaska Water Quality Standards (Standards). These Standards are guides to help create programs that protect and restore water quality in Alaska. The Standards help set the limits for state and federal discharge permits and clean-up standards for contaminated sites and landfills. These programs also include the impaired water body list and the non-point source pollution program.

It is especially important that the regulation limits (criteria) outlined in the Standards be easy to read and understand, and that they be based on the most current scientific information.

DEC is proposing to update the *Alaska Water Quality Criteria Manual for Toxic and Other Deleterious Organic and Inorganic Substances* (Toxics Manual) containing tables of numeric criteria as well as reference information for all criteria. The Toxics Manual will be adopted by reference in the Water Quality Standards' regulations at 18 AAC 70. The intent of this revision is to make the Toxics Manual easier to use by reorganizing the table of numeric criteria. This update also revises the chronic aluminum criterion, corrects an error in the saltwater ammonia criterion, adopts the most current drinking water MCLs, and includes other EPA-recommended updates to the aquatic life criteria. The majority of the criteria remain the same as those currently used by the state, although 20 criteria have been updated by more recent scientific information.

For more details, please see the attached public notice. Fact sheets about the Water Quality Standards are also available on the Water Quality Standards' website at <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/water/wqsar/wqs/index.htm>.

Before any of these changes can be implemented, DEC will hold public hearings so that Alaskans who are interested in the Water Quality Standards regulations may learn about the proposed changes and discuss them in detail.

If you are interested in seeing the proposed revision text, you may obtain copies of them from DEC's offices statewide, or on DEC's Homepage at <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/index.htm>. To have a copy mailed to you call Jim Powell at (907) 465-5185 or Erin Strang at (907) 451-2881.

Public workshops:

Juneau: 4 pm to 6 pm on Tuesday, January 20, 2009, Main Conference Room, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, 410 Willoughby Avenue, Juneau, AK 99811

Fairbanks: 4 pm to 6 pm on Wednesday, January 21, 2009, Conference Room B/C, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, 610 University Avenue, Fairbanks, AK 99709

Oral or written testimony may be given at a public hearing from 4 pm to 6 pm on Thursday, January 22, 2009, 1st Floor Main Conference Room, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, 555 Cordova Street, Anchorage, AK 99501. Statewide call-in available by dialing 1-800-315-6338, Conference Code 2881 followed by the pound (#) sign.

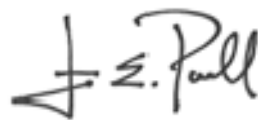
We will be accepting written public comments on the proposed revisions until February 6, 2009, at 5:00 p.m.

Comments should be mailed or emailed to:

Erin Strang
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Water
Water Quality Standards
610 University Avenue
Fairbanks, AK 99709
erin.strang@alaska.gov

Thank you for your continuing interest in the Alaska Water Quality Standards regulations.

Sincerely yours,



Jim Powell
Section Manager
Water Quality Standards

Enclosures