



**Antidegradation Public Workshop
Participant Notebook
May 13-14, 2015**

**Alaska Department of Environmental
Conservation
Division of Water
Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System**

**Performing Arts Center, Voth Hall
621 W 6th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99501**

Antidegradation Public Workshop Participant Notebook

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Antidegradation Implementation Regulations Forward

May 13, 2015

Dear Workshop Participant:

Antidegradation is a tool used to protect the water quality in the State of Alaska. Antidegradation implementation is the method or process for determining whether and to what extent the water quality may be lowered.

The Federal Clean Water Act requires states to have an anti-degradation policy and implementation methods. Federal regulation at 40 CFR 131.12 specifies States must have an antidegradation policy that:

- Protects existing uses
- Authorizes the lowering of water quality in high quality waters, where necessary for social or economic importance
- Provides mechanism to provide additional protection for water of exceptional ecological or recreational significance. These are often called Outstanding National Resource Waters or ONRWs.

Alaska's current antidegradation policy, adopted in 1997, is found in the Water Quality Standards regulations at 18 AAC 70.015. EPA approved Alaska's policy with the stipulation that Alaska write implementation guidance. DEC adopted interim implementation methods in July 2010, and has initiated to develop and adopt final implementation procedures.

DEC began its recent antidegradation efforts in 2008 with a contractor produced report that outlined several options for the State to develop antidegradation implementation guidance and policy. Then in 2009, DEC hosted a public workshop on antidegradation issues to inform policy makers, wastewater discharge permittees, permit writers and interested public regarding options for implementation procedures. From information gathered in the workshop DEC formulated and adopted the Interim Antidegradation Implementation Methods in 2010. In 2012, DEC assembled a stakeholder workgroup, comprised of representatives from state resource agencies, industry and non-governmental sources, to evaluate options and to provide recommendations on various core elements for the final antidegradation implementation methods to be developed by DEC. In January 2013, the workgroup completed a final report that highlights key issues and makes recommendations for drafting new antidegradation implementation regulations. The Division drafted proposed regulations based on the workgroup recommendations and departmental input, review and approval. The proposed regulations were noticed for public comment on January 17, 2014 for 60 days, the comment period was extended for an additional 30 days, and closed April 16, 2014. The Division received comments and based on the public feedback has decided to hold additional workshop(s) in 2015 to discuss and evaluate select issues that were raised during the comment period. The Division expects to evaluate recommendations and information provided at this Public Workshop for possible regulation revisions and notice the revised regulations for a second public comment period.

The Division of Water thanks you for your participation in this Workshop