

Environmental Quality Board
P.O. Box 8477
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8477

Re: Philadelphia Water's Comments to the Proposed Disinfection Requirements Rule

Summary of Comments to the Environmental Quality Board (EQB)

Dear Board Members:

Philadelphia Water hereby submits its comments to the proposed rulemaking and proposed changes to Chapter 109 relating to the Disinfection Requirements Rule.

A brief summary of those comments are contained below. Please refer to the attached full formal comments for specific comment details and underlying support for Philadelphia Water's responses:

- **PaDEP has not identified any public health benefit from increasing the minimum chlorine disinfectant residual in the distribution system.** During stakeholder meetings, both before and after the proposed rulemaking was published, it was determined that increasing the required minimum distribution system disinfectant residual will not result in any known public health benefit. This specifically includes any reduction in *E. coli* and *Legionella*. Violations of such higher standards will result in public notifications where no true health risk exists, thereby undermining public confidence in its drinking water. Further, the cost savings that PaDEP cites that are associated with avoiding the waterborne disease outbreaks, *Cryptosporidium* and *Salmonella*, simply do not exist. These outbreaks would not be impacted by raising the required minimum distribution system disinfectant residual.
- **While there are no known health benefits of increasing the required minimum distribution system disinfectant residual, there are well known health risks.** Increasing the required minimum distribution system disinfectant residual will expose the public to higher levels of scientifically proven carcinogenic disinfection byproducts.
- **At this time, establish a required minimum distribution system disinfectant residual standard of 0.1 mg/L and adopt an information collection partnership in Pennsylvania to better understand the relationship between disinfectant residual and health effects.** Although the current required minimum distribution system disinfectant residual standard of 0.02 mg/L cannot assure a disinfectant is present, a standard of 0.1 mg/L can. Through gathering and evaluating comprehensive data from water systems in Pennsylvania, the information collection partnership will establish PaDEP as a leader in national efforts to make better data-driven decisions.
- **Collaborate with Pennsylvania water systems to define a required minimum distribution system disinfectant residual level that is practical, achievable, and balances the known risks and avoids unintended consequences.** Despite the lack of any identifiable public health benefit in the proposed rulemaking, there is the certainty of numerous risks and unintended consequences. Specifically, under the proposed rulemaking, there will be significant increases in capital and annual operational costs, public notification when there is no scientifically defensible public health risk, and higher population exposures to scientifically proven carcinogenic disinfection byproducts.
- **Retain heterotrophic plate count (HPC) analysis as a means to achieve compliance.** Water systems have proven HPC to be an effective parameter in demonstrating the control of bacteriological activity in water. Removing this provision, but still allowing bottled, bulk and retail water systems to utilize HPC for compliance, will weaken public health protection and discourage the use of HPC as a water quality parameter.

In addition to Philadelphia Water's full formal comments, we adopt and support the attached comments provided by the Disinfection Requirements Rule Stakeholder Workgroup (DRRSW) as our own.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



David Katz
Deputy Commissioner
Compliance
Philadelphia Water