



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION III
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029

February 10, 2011

Richard A. Eskin
Maryland Department of the Environment
Science Services Administration
1800 Washington Boulevard, Suite 540
Baltimore, MD 21230-1718

Dear Mr. Eskin:

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Maryland Department of the Environment's request to amend the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and wasteload allocations (WLAs) in the *Western Maryland pH TMDLs for Casselman River, Georges Creek, Savage River, Upper North Branch of the Potomac River, and Willis Creek Watersheds*, which was approved by EPA on April 17, 2008. The TMDL report was originally developed by MDE to address low pH in fifty-two impaired stream segments in western Maryland and Pennsylvania.

As indicated in your letter, MDE received a discharge permit request requiring that two mining operations be incorporated into the Western Maryland pH TMDL report. The addition of the dischargers to the TMDL report will significantly increase both flow and iron loadings into the streams impacted by the mining operations, namely Aaron Run and Mill Run. As a result, the TMDLs and WLAs in the streams associated with the mining operations will increase as well. Nevertheless, MDE does not anticipate that the increase of iron into the system will create a violation of the water quality standard for pH. As explained by MDE, the mining operations will be required under their permits to discharge at a pH level that will not violate the end-of-pipe water quality standard. The mining operations will adhere to this requirement through applicable treatment processes.

MDE conducted a public review for the proposed revisions to the TMDL report due to the significant level of change that the revised TMDL report will require. The public comment period was open from June 4, 2010 through July 6, 2010. MDE did not receive any written comments during this time period.

Based upon this information, EPA approves the requested revisions to the TMDL report. If you have any comments or questions concerning this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me at 215-814-5796

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Helene Drago".

Helene Drago,
TMDL Program Manager