



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

DEC - 5 2013

OFFICE OF WATER

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: A New Long-Term Vision for Assessment, Restoration, and Protection under the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) Program

FROM: Nancy K. Stoner
Acting Assistant Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Nancy K. Stoner", written over the printed name.

TO: Regional Administrators
Region 1 - 10

I am pleased to announce a new framework for implementing the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) Program -- *A Long-Term Vision for Assessment, Restoration, and Protection under the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) Program* (see attachment). I thank you and your staff for your efforts with the States to complete this new Program Vision.

Now is the time to move the CWA 303(d) Program in a more strategic direction. Over the past two decades, the experience gained in assessing and reporting on water quality and in developing 65,000 TMDLs has revealed opportunities to make better strides toward water quality improvement and protection, as well as more efficient program management. Sharing a belief that the time is ripe to improve implementation of the CWA 303(d) Program, State and the EPA program managers began a collaborative process in August 2011 to develop a new framework for managing program responsibilities, which is now articulated in this Vision.

I ask each Region to work closely with their States to help them achieve this new Program Vision. While it is not a requirement and does not alter the CWA 303(d) regulations, it does encourage States to develop tailored strategies to implement their CWA 303(d) Program responsibilities in the context of their overall water quality goals. Prioritization should guide the location and timing of the TMDL development, the use of alternative restoration or protection approaches, and the allocation of resources. Each EPA Region should work closely with their States on setting priorities in such settings as Performance Partnership Agreements/Grants. The EPA will continue to provide tools, data/information, and technical assistance to States on prioritization and other goals of this new Vision. To help ensure accountability, the EPA and States will assess our progress with a new program measure in FY15 and beyond.

I am confident that this Vision will help States and the EPA, in collaboration with stakeholders, to more successfully realize the objectives of the Clean Water Act. Thank you again for your and your staff's efforts. If you have any feedback, please contact me or Benita Best-Wong, Acting Director of the Office

of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds; Tom Wall, Director of the Assessment and Watershed Protection Division; or John Goodin, Chief of the Watershed Branch.

Attachment: A Long-Term Vision for Assessment, Restoration, and Protection under the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) Program

cc: Director, Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds
Director, Office of Standards and Technology
Director, Office of Wastewater Management
Director, Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water
Water Division Directors, Regions 1-10