State Coordination with the Public is Key to a Successful Water Quality Standards (WQS) Variance

EPA

WQS VARIANCE PROCESS

1. Discharger and state determine that a WQS variance is needed to improve water quality.
2. The state proposes a WQS variance, and requests public comment on the WQS variance and supporting documentation. The state holds public hearings and obtains public input.
3. If proceeding, the state adopts the WQS variance after considering public input.
4. The state submits the WQS variance package to EPA for review.
5. If approved by EPA, the WQS variance is implemented.
6. The state reevaluates the WQS variance, with public input, to see if more can be done to improve water quality.

ENGAGE THE PUBLIC AT EACH STEP

1. Collaborate with stakeholders such as through a workgroup.
2. Clearly explain the problem, the pollutant reduction actions, the timing, and how the public can engage.

   Be transparent.

   Request public comment.
3. Consider all public comments and communicate how public input was used.
4. Provide the response to comments to the public.
5. Communicate activities implemented and water quality progress.

   Make monitoring results publicly available.
6. Keep the public informed and invite feedback on water quality progress.

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Visit the EPA's WQS Variance website for more information.