



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



PAUL R. LEPAGE
GOVERNOR

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COMMISSIONER

September 28, 2016

Ralph Abele
Chief Water Quality Branch
United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region 1
5 Post Office Square Suite 100
Boston, MA 02109-3912

RE: Maine's 2014 § 303(d) list and Integrated Water Quality Report

Dear Mr. *Ralph* Abele,

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection hereby submits our final draft 2014 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as required of §§ 305(b), 303(d) and 314 of the Clean Water Act, and in fulfillment of the reporting requirements of 38 M.R.S. § 464(3)(A) of the State of Maine's Water Classification Program.

Descriptions of the listing methods used by the Department are presented in Chapter 4. Specific surface waterbody attainment and impairment assignments are found in the Appendices (a separate document and electronic file). The appendices are broken into four waterbody types: rivers/streams, lakes, wetlands, and estuarine/marine waters.

Summary of Significant Findings

- o Six river and stream assessment units (AUs) are delisted in the 2014 cycle.
 - o One AU is delisted from Category 4-B to Category 2 due to attainment of water quality standards. This delisting of the East Branch Sebasticook River in Corinna and Eastland is the result of concerted efforts of Maine DEP and the USEPA to clean up the former Eastland Woolen Mill superfund site.
 - o In September 2014, the USEPA approved addenda to the 2009 Statewide Maine Bacteria TMDL and consequently four bacteria-impaired AUs are moved from Category 5-A to Category 4-A.
 - o A new Category 5-A cause of impairment is added to an existing AU in Category 4-B, thereby creating a delisting.

- o Four river and stream AUs are added to Category 3 for potential impairments in aquatic communities, and two AUs are added to Category 4-C for fish-passage problems. Nine AUs are added to Category 5-A, including three AUs on the mainstem of the Aroostook

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River from Presque Isle to the Canadian border where monitoring data indicate a violation of Maine's pH criteria. Efforts have continued to newly map AUs or correct existing mapping; this work has resulted in increases in the mileages in Categories 1 and 2.

- Lakes and ponds of Maine were stable (as a percentage of total assessed waters) with respect to their listing categories during the 2012 to 2014 time frame as no lakes were moved among the attainment Categories.
- All freshwaters in Maine continue to be listed for an impaired Fish Consumption Use caused by mercury from sources beyond the region. These waters are in Category 4-A because of USEPA's 2007 approval of a Regional Mercury TMDL. Many mainstem river segments are listed in Category 5-D for non-attainment of the fish consumption use due to legacy PCB contamination of fish tissue.
- Maine DEP began development of a biological monitoring and assessment program for freshwater wetlands in 1998. A provisional linear discriminant model to assess freshwater wetland macroinvertebrate communities has been developed and will become the basis for wetland-specific numeric criteria once implemented through rule-making. For the current cycle, attainment decisions are based on expert judgment of DEP biologists using statutory narrative aquatic life use criteria. In the 2014 report, five waters are added to Category 2 based on new data showing attainment, two waters are added to Category 3 based on data indicating potential impairment, and one water is added to Category 5 based on data indicating impairment. Furthermore, three waters are moved to Category 4-A due to inclusion in approved TMDLs, and one water (East Branch Sebasticook River wetland) is delisted to Category 2 due to attainment of water quality standards.
- For estuarine and marine waters, DEP is in the process of creating a new naming scheme for AUs to enable digitization and thus spatial tracking of listed segments between reporting cycles. The 2014 report has taken an interim step of updating Categories 2 through 5-B-1 to account for current impairments. As a result of this update, many AUs previously listed in Categories 2, 3 and 4-A are moved to Category 5-B and will remain there until a major Statewide Bacteria TMDL revision can be completed.
- One estuarine AU is delisted from Category 4-B to Category 2 because it was determined that the listing was in error. Two AUs are added to Category 4-A due to bacteria impairments from CSOs. In the sole Category 4-C AU, the listing cause is corrected to indicate that observed impairments are caused by tidal flow alterations. No changes are made to Category 5-A.
- The Groundwater Program is described in Chapter 6. A significant portion of Maine's groundwater may be threatened by contamination, particularly in unforested areas, which comprise approximately 11% of the State. Important sources of groundwater contamination in Maine include disposal activities such as landfills and septic systems, leaking storage facilities, agriculture, and sites contaminated by hazardous materials spills, winter salt applications, or previously unregulated activities.

We greatly appreciate the outstanding support and professionalism of Jennie Bridge, and her prompt, accurate and insightful reviews of the Report. Her attention to detail was a great help to my staff and has significantly improved the final version we are now submitting for final review.

We look forward to EPA's review of this final version of Maine's 2014 Integrated Report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael Kuhns".

Michael Kuhns, Director
Bureau of Water Quality

Cc: Don Witherill, Director, Division of Environmental Assessment (DEA)
Susanne Meidel, Water Quality Standards Coordinator (DEA)
Jennie Bridge, USEPA Region 1
Diane Switzer, USEPA Region 1
Greg Dain, USEPA Region 1