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2026 Triennial Review/Arkansas Water Quality Standards: Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment - Division of Environmental Quality Seeking Public Input

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The Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment - Division of Environmental Quality ("DEQ") announced it is seeking informal public input for the 2026 Water Quality Standards ("WQS").

The WQS are found in Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission Rule 2.

DEQ is seeking informal input through a survey.

The Clean Water Act requires states and authorizes tribes to periodically review and, as appropriate, adopt new or revised WQS to meet the requirements of the Clean Water Act. They must submit any new or revised WQS resulting from such a review to the United States Environmental Protection Agency for review and approval or disapproval under Clean Water Act Section 303(c). This process is known as the Triennial Review. It must be undertaken with public notice and comment opportunities.

Section 303 of the Clean Water Act requires that each state develop WQS for jurisdictional Waters of the United States within their borders. They establish the water quality goals for a specific waterbody and also serve as a regulatory basis for the development of water quality-based effluent limits and strategies for individual point sources.

Section 303 specifies the adoption of WQS as primarily the responsibility of the states and tribes. The states must adopt uses consistent with Clean Water Act objectives and water quality criteria sufficient to protect its chosen uses. However, EPA is required to ensure that the state WQS meet the minimum requirements of the Clean Water Act. Therefore, the Clean Water Act regulations provide for EPA review of any state WQS changes.

The DEQ survey period will be open from July 15 through August 14.

A link to the DEQ notice and survey can be found here.