



REGION 6

DALLAS, TX 75270

March 27, 2025

TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL

Stacie Wassell, Associate Director
Office of Water Quality
Arkansas Division of Environmental Quality
5301 Northshore Drive
North Little Rock, Arkansas 72118-5317
stacie.wassell@arkansas.gov

RE: Arkansas 2022 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report

Ms. Wassell:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (the EPA) has reviewed the 2022 State of Arkansas Clean Water Act (CWA) § 303(d)/§ 305(b) Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report, which contains Arkansas's Section 303(d) list of water quality limited segments, transmitted March 10, 2025. The EPA is taking action to approve all waterbodies identified by Arkansas as impaired on the Section 303(d) list.

In accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 130.7(b)(5), States are required to "assemble and evaluate all existing and readily available water quality-related data to develop the list" required by Section 303(d) of the CWA and 40 C.F.R. §130.7(b)(1). The EPA concludes that Arkansas has met the requirements of 40 C.F.R. § 130.7(b) with regard to all of the waterbody/parameter combinations listed by the State, identified in Enclosure 1. Therefore, the EPA approves the State's decision to list these waters.

While the EPA is approving all impairments identified by the State of Arkansas on the Section 303(d) list, the EPA is taking no action and requesting additional information from Arkansas regarding the development and application of water quality standards on the State's waterbodies subject to minerals Ecoregional Reference values. The EPA appreciates the ongoing work being done by the Arkansas Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to update water quality standards pertaining to minerals, and Arkansas DEQ's expressed commitment to continue working to address minerals water quality standards. The EPA remains ready to provide support to the State in these efforts to assure achievement of the State's water quality goals and CWA requirements.

The EPA is also taking no action at this time and requesting additional information from Arkansas on a small number of waterbody/parameter combinations. The EPA requests additional information from the State regarding the impairment status of Lake Poinsette and a segment of Bayou Meto for Turbidity – Base Flows (Enclosure 1). The EPA is also requesting clarification from the State regarding the appropriate application of water quality standards and assessment methodology to assess Lake Ouachita for mercury (Enclosure 1).

The State's 2022 submission included new sampling data for seven water segments in the Illinois River Watershed not considered by the EPA in its review of the 2020 list. The State applied these data and its method and determined that total phosphorus concentrations in the seven waterbodies do not warrant including these waters on the 2022 list. The EPA approves the State's decision to not include the seven waterbody/parameter pairs on the list.

The EPA appreciates Arkansas DEQ's effort to develop the 2022 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me directly at (214) 665-7107, or your staff may contact Richard Wooster, Supervisor, Water Quality Protection Section at (214) 665-6473 or via email at wooster.richard@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Troy C. Hill, P.E.
Director
Water Division

Enclosure

cc: Shane Khoury, Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment Secretary
Joe Martin, Deputy Associate Director, OWQ
Felicia Osburn, Ecologist Coordinator, OWQ