

Statewide Mercury Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Addendum – 2024 Updated List of Impaired Water Bodies

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) completed, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) approved, a statewide mercury TMDL in 2018. The TMDL addresses most inland water bodies not supporting designated uses for fish consumption due to exceedances of the numeric mercury water column Water Quality Standard (WQS) and/or elevated mercury concentrations in fish tissue. Mercury-impaired water bodies not covered by the statewide mercury TMDL include the Great Lakes and connecting channels; contaminated legacy sites (i.e., Areas of Concern and Superfund sites); and certain inland water bodies where the level of pollutant reduction required to achieve the mercury WQS will be different than the mercury load that was calculated for the TMDL. The Statewide Mercury TMDL and associated load reduction goals were developed to meet the target fish tissue concentration of 0.35 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg) based on the assumption that fish mercury concentrations will respond proportionally to reductions in atmospheric mercury loadings.

EGLE assesses fish tissue concentration data and mercury water column data on a biennial basis in accordance with our water quality monitoring strategy and our Integrated Report Assessment Methodology. Waters determined to be mercury-impaired (above the 0.35 mg/kg fish tissue target or the water column target criteria of 1.3 nanograms per liter [ng/L]) and below the 1.012 mg/kg fish tissue maximum would be considered addressed by the TMDL. Waters determined to be mercury-impaired above the 1.012 mg/kg fish tissue maximum or above the ambient water column mercury concentration of 9.5 ng/L would not be considered as addressed by the TMDL.

EGLE's intent was to modify the TMDL document by updating the list of waters covered by the TMDL (as defined in Appendix A) every other year, in conjunction with the submittal of Michigan's biennial Integrated Report, beginning with the 2020 version of the Integrated Report and continuing with this 2024 Integrated Report. To that end, EGLE is presenting this proposed list of new impaired water bodies to the public and the USEPA. It consists of two lists of water bodies which make up two tabs in the addenda spreadsheet. The first tab is titled "Add to Statewide Mercury TMDL" and contains water bodies that will be added to Appendix A of the TMDL. These are newly listed in the 2024 Integrated Report. The second tab, titled "Under Evaluation" consists of water bodies listed in previous versions of the Integrated Report. They are under evaluation to determine whether they should be added to Appendix A of the TMDL or are exempt due to being within a Great Lake or Connecting Channel, being located in a Michigan Area of Concern, or are exempt due to requiring a greater percentage mercury reduction than called for in the TMDL. After this evaluation, water bodies as exempt will have the reason for exemption recorded in the ATTAINS database for recordkeeping purposes. This evaluation will expedite the Statewide TDML addenda process for future Integrated Report cycles.

This updated list is based on additional water quality and fish contaminant monitoring data generated since the TMDL was finalized. Once the USEPA approves the revised TMDL Appendix A, the newly proposed water bodies will be part of this statewide TMDL.