

## Willamette Basin Mercury TMDL Advisory Committee Meeting Set

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality invites the public to the next Willamette Basin Mercury Total Maximum Daily Load Advisory Committee member meeting.

### Summary

DEQ and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are revising the 2006 Willamette Basin Mercury Total Maximum Daily Load, commonly called a TMDL, to meet a new mercury standard and meet a court-ordered deadline of April 2019. The TMDL is being updated to meet Oregon's 2011 revised water quality criterion for methyl mercury, which is eight times more stringent than the 2006 criterion. The goal of the revised TMDL is to reduce mercury in the Willamette Basin to levels allowing safe consumption of fish.

### How do I participate?

This meeting is open to the public, however discussion is limited to advisory committee members only. Everyone will have an opportunity to provide written comment to DEQ during DEQ's public review period, tentatively scheduled for November 2018.

### Meeting details

**When:** 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
Thursday, Feb. 15, 2018

**Where:** Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Celilo Room  
700 NE Multnomah St.  
Portland, OR 97232

### About the Willamette Basin Mercury TMDL

In June 2017, DEQ and EPA formed a team to revise the TMDL. The team includes staff and management from DEQ, EPA's Watershed Unit Staff and an EPA regional mercury expert, and contractors.

In the 2006 TMDL, mercury reduction plans from point source and nonpoint sources were the primary vehicles to reduce mercury in the basin. Monitoring and data collection were also required of specific point sources and point source sectors. These data, as well as other available data, will be used to revise the TMDL.

The TMDL also included a Water Quality Management Plan that outlined activities, programs, legal authorities, management strategies, schedules and timelines, monitoring and evaluation methods, cost and funding resources and other implementation measures.

In October 2011, EPA approved Oregon's revisions to its methylmercury fish tissue concentration criterion for the protection of human health, which changed the acceptable fish tissue level from 0.3 mg/kg to a more protective 0.040 mg/kg. However, as part of a larger lawsuit filed in 2012, Northwest Environmental Advocates claimed that EPA's approval of various Oregon TMDLs, including the Willamette Mercury TMDL, was arbitrary and capricious. Specific to the Willamette Mercury TMDL, Northwest Environmental Advocates argued, in part, that the TMDL did not meet all water quality standards, did not include individual waste load allocations, and was not expressed in terms of daily loads.

In April 2017, District Court Judge Hernandez supported Northwest Environmental Advocates' complaint, but remanded the TMDL (rather than voiding it) to EPA and Oregon, and set a two-year deadline for EPA and the state to revise the TMDL. The TMDL must be revised by April 2019.

### Where can I get more information?

Find out more and view the advisory committee member list and charter at <http://www.oregon.gov/deq/wq/tmdls/Pages/willgtmdlac2018.aspx>, or contact Paula Calvert, Basin Coordinator:  
**Phone:** 503-229-5101 or 800-452-4011  
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**Email:** [calvert.paula@deq.state.or.us](mailto:calvert.paula@deq.state.or.us)

### Alternative formats

Documents can be provided upon request in an alternate format for individuals with disabilities or in a language other than English for people with limited English skills. To request a document in another format or language, call DEQ in Portland at 503-229-5696, or toll-free in Oregon at 800-452-4011, ext. 5696; or email [deqinfo@deq.state.or.us](mailto:deqinfo@deq.state.or.us)



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### TMDL Program

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