



Commonwealth of Virginia

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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**Virginia Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (VPDES) General Permit
Regulation for Potable Water Treatment Plants (9VAC25-860)**

**Piedmont Regional Office
4949-A Cox Rd, Glenn Allen, VA 23060**

**August 31, 2026
10:00 am**

MEETING MINUTES

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Members Present	
Joseph Bryan – Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)	David Sirois – Chesterfield County Utilities
Robert Edelman Virginia Department of Health – Office of Drinking Water (VDH)	Ann Zimmerman – Loudoun Water
Andrew Krakie – Aqua Virginia, Inc.	

The following TAC members were absent from the meeting: Steven Friend – Public Utilities, Town of Warrenton

Technical Support Staff Present	
Azra Bilalagic – DEQ	Katherine Heitz - DEQ
Kevin Crider – DEQ BRRO	Jaime Robb – DEQ
Morgan Emanuel – DEQ	Meredith Williams – DEQ

Committee Member Designee Present	
Russel Smith – Public Utilities, Town of Warrenton	

Meeting Notes

Welcome and Introductions:

Azra Bilalagic, Guidance and Regulatory Coordinator with the Office of VPDES Program, welcomed members to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting for the reissuance of the VPDES General Permit Regulation for Potable Water Treatment Plants (9VAC25-860).

Purpose, Regulatory Process and Role of the TAC:

Ms. Bilalagic gave a brief overview of purpose of the TAC and how the regulatory process works. The general permit will expire on June 30, 2028, and must be reissued and amended for another five-year permit term. A Notice of Intended Regulatory Action (NOIRA) was published on June 15, 2026, and ran through July 15, 2026. No comments were received during the public comment period.

Ms. Bilalagic reviewed the purpose and roles of the TAC, which are to assist DEQ staff in development of a draft regulation for a general permit. The TAC's role is advisory only, with the goal being to reach a consensus on a draft of the general permit regulation that staff will use to develop a proposed regulation that they will recommend to DEQ management and the State Water Control Board (Board). Neither DEQ nor the Board are obligated to accept the TAC's recommendation. The Board will decide if they support the recommendation before the proposed general permit is published for public comment.

Overview of the Potable Water Treatment Plants General Permit

Ms. Bilalagic provided an overview of the general permit. The regulation governs the discharge of wastewater from potable water treatment plants to surface waters. "Potable water treatment plant" means an establishment engaged in producing water for domestic, commercial, or industrial use as designated by NAICS Code 221310 – Water Supply and Irrigation Systems, SIC Code 4941 – Water Supply, or others as approved by the department. The permit was originally issued on December 24, 2008, and last reissued July 1, 2023. There are currently 109 permittees covered by the permit.

Known Revisions

Ms. Bilalagic covered the proposed revisions to the regulation;

- Updated regulation to reflect a new permit term of July 1, 2028, through June 30, 2033
- Removed the definitions of "Board" and "Director".
- Updated 9VAC25-860-60 E to add new language to address incomplete registration statement submittals.
- Quarterly effluent monitoring requirements for Total Recoverable Aluminum, Dissolved Organic Carbon, and Hardness have been added to Part I A 1 and I A 2.
- Define quantification level in part I B 7.

- Revised Part I B 10 (Whole Effluent Toxicity testing) special condition to improve clarity.
- Revised part I B 11 special condition to specify that authorized discharges shall be controlled as necessary through the effluent limitations, best management practices, and other conditions specified in this permit such that discharges do not cause or contribute to a violation of water quality standards in 9VAC25-260.
- Updated Part II I (reports of noncompliance) to address online reporting.
- Revised Part II Y (Transfer of permit coverage) to address when permits may be administratively transferred.

Open Discussion

Ms. Bilalagic opened the floor for discussion on the proposed revisions to the regulation. TAC members began by discussing the new language added to monitoring requirements, specifically the addition of Total Recoverable Aluminum. It was noted by one TAC member that not all plants use Aluminum in their treatment process, and questioned whether it was necessary to include universal testing for it. After some discussion, the consensus was that because permittees may request a monitoring waiver for total recoverable aluminum, hardness, and dissolved organic carbon if analytical results from the first four consecutive quarters demonstrate that total recoverable aluminum is present at concentrations below the applicable quantification limit it would be prudent to have all facilities conduct this monitoring. Ms. Bilalagic asked members of the TAC about what their experience was with testing for aluminum in raw water sources; only one member had seen testing done and it had not shown any traces of aluminum.

A committee member asked if registration statements address what chemicals facilities are using in their treatment process. Registration statements do request that facilities provide a list of the chemicals used in wastewater treatment, and this section could be updated to include aluminum containing chemicals. Generally, however, information on treatment is maintained on site in the Operations & Maintenance (O&M) Manual, and DEQ does not typically receive this information, unless requested or reviewed during site inspections.

DEQ staff clarified that if a waiver is issued it would be valid until the end of the permit term. The possibility of adding language to the permit requiring a permittee to disclose that they had begun using aluminum based chemicals was discussed. A committee member asked if yearly reporting requirements would capture the fact that facilities who had obtained a waiver had begun using aluminum, however DEQ staff explained that they would want prior notification to facilities beginning to use aluminum based chemicals.

The committee moved to discuss chlorine monitoring. A committee member asked if facilities had the equipment to measure Total Chlorine to the level set in the regulation. Another committee member stated that they do not. DEQ staff noted that a similar issue exists with VPDES Individual Permits (IPs), where the limit is below detections levels. These limits come directly from Water Quality Standards, and are only applicable if chlorine is present in the process wastewater. A committee member noted the phrase “Toxic Pollutant,” and asked if it was defined in the regulation. DEQ staff explained that it is defined in the Virginia Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (VPDES) Permit Regulation 9VAC25-31 and is incorporated by reference.

DEQ staff asked committee members about the most common method they use for monitoring aluminum. A committee member mentioned that VDH refers to what is used in the Federal Register. DEQ staff noted that practical experience has shown that specifying QLs in the permits instead of referring to the test methods has prevented issues with labs using incorrect QLs. Committee members discussed associating the selected quantification level (QL) to the methods that will work with that limit. DEQ staff clarified that for this reissuance, no limitations for total recoverable aluminum are proposed, only monitoring for this parameter along with hardness and DOC is proposed. A committee asked if what flow rate is referenced in the Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET) testing condition. DEQ staff clarified that the flow rate referenced in the condition refers to the maximum daily effluent discharge flow rate.

DEQ staff explained that the special condition in Part I.B.11 is proposed to be revised to avoid end-result provisions and to state that discharges authorized by this permit must be controlled, as necessary, through effluent limitations, best management practices, and other permit conditions to ensure they do not cause or contribute to a violation of water quality standards in 9VAC25-260. Staff further clarified that the permit does not specify which Best Management Practices (BMPs) permittees must use; instead, permittees have the discretion to select the practices that best fit their facility's operations. The condition outlines the various components a permittee must meet to remain in compliance with the permit.

Committee members discussed what information should be included in the waiver request, and if it was appropriate to include that information in the general permit. DEQ staff explained that more detailed information will be included in the implementation procedures for this general permit.

A committee member mentioned that it might benefit the regulated community to understand the “why” of the changes being made. DEQ staff explained that the rationale for the changes was included in the fact sheet for the permit, as well as the Townhall documents. The possibility of including rationale in the permit transmittal letter was also mentioned. The aluminum criteria became effective on June 25, 2024, and DEQ is in the process of incorporating it into VPDES permits.

Members discussed the new language for transfer of a permit; discussion focused on what the appropriate documentation would be to demonstrate that the permit was transferred to the new owner and if the new owner would receive any documentation from DEQ. DEQ staff clarified that permit coverage would be issued to the new owner.

Next Steps:

Ms. Bilalagic covered the steps in the reissuance of the general permit regulation:

- Members discussed whether a second TAC was necessary.
 - DEQ staff will follow up with TAC members with more information regarding QLs.
 - Committee members did not believe a second TAC was necessary.
- Meeting minutes will be published in Town Hall
- Present to the State Water Control Board (estimated in December 2026) to ask for approval to go to public comment and hearing.

- A Notice of Public Comment period will be held for 60 days.
- Complete the regulatory action such that the effective date of the new general permit regulation will be July 1, 2028.

Adjournment:

Ms. Bilalagic noted that all relevant material from meetings, including the meeting minutes, would be posted on Townhall. Ms. Bilalagic thanked all the TAC members and adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:13 a.m.