



Commonwealth of Virginia

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

www.deq.virginia.gov

David L. Bulova
Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources

Michael S. Rolband, PE, PWD, PWS Emeritus
Director

Virginia Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (VPDES) General Permit
Regulation for Vehicle Wash Facilities and Laundry Facilities (9VAC25-194)

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

May 11, 2026
10:00 am

MEETING MINUTES

Table with 2 columns and 3 rows listing Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Members Present: Buddy Davis, Karl Mertig, Mark Wisdom.

The following TAC members were absent from the meeting: Mike Ashley – Mid-Atlantic Carwash Association; Christina VanLear – Norfolk Department of Public Works-Storm Water

Table with 2 columns and 7 rows listing Technical Support Staff Present: Azra Bilalagic, Joseph Bryan, Nelson Daniel, Sarah Desmarais, Erica Duncan, Morgan Emanuel, Laura Galli, Riley Isaacs, Jaime Robb, Meredith Williams, Max Wheeler.

Table with 1 column and 1 row for Interested Parties.

Meeting Notes

Welcome and Introductions:

Azra Bilalagic, Guidance and Regulatory Coordinator with the Office of VPDES permits, welcomed members to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting for the reissuance of the VPDES General Permit Regulation for Vehicle Wash Facilities and Laundry Facilities.

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 December 31, 2027, and must be reissued and amended to ensure continued coverage for new and existing users. A Notice of Intended Regulatory Action (NOIRA) was published on February 9, 2026, and ran through March 11, 2026. One comment was 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 Vehicle Wash and Laundry Facilities General Permit

Ms. Bilalagic provided an overview of the general permit. The regulation governs the discharge of wastewater from vehicle wash facilities and laundry facilities to surface waters. “Vehicle wash” is defined as any fixed or mobile facility where the manual, automatic, or self-service exterior washing of vehicles is conducted. “Laundry” is defined as any self-service facility where the washing of clothes is conducted as designated by NAICS Code 812310 and SIC 7215. It does not include industrial laundry or facilities that engage in dry cleaning. There are currently 97 permittees: 14 in the Blue Ridge Regional Office, 25 in the Northern Regional Office, 12 in the Piedmont Regional Office, 12 in the Southwest Regional Office, 9 in the Tidewater Regional Office and 25 in the Valley Regional Office.

NOIRA Comments

One comment was received during the public comment period;

- Requested consideration of a minimum flow threshold below which annual water quality sampling/testing would not be required in order to reduce overhead costs and provide an incentive for other car wash businesses to reduce their water discharge volumes (and consumption) to stay below the threshold.

Additionally, one comment was received outside of the public comment period;

- Requested information on how PFAS chemicals discharged from vehicle wash operations and laundries will be addressed in the general permit, and
- Asked whether golf cart washing, cleaning, and repair facilities, including those located at golf courses, are or will be included in the definition of "vehicle wash" facilities.

Known Revisions

Ms. Bilalagic covered the proposed revisions to the regulation;

- Updated regulation to reflect a new permit term of 1/1/28 to 12/31/2032.
- Updated regulatory language in response to SB 657 (2022).
- Provided definitions of the terms "Department" and "Director."
- New language added to 9VAC25-194-60 E to address incomplete Registration Statement submittals.
- Updated language in 9VAC25-194-70 Part I A 3 and A 4 regarding the discharge limitation for Total Residual Chlorine from .011 mg/L to 0.011 mg/L for clarity.
- Revised the discharge limitations in 9VAC25-194-70 Part I A 3 and A 4 to reflect the more stringent water quality standards that became effective October 21, 2019:
 - *E. coli* was changed from 235 CFU/100 mL to 126 CFU/100 mL.
 - Enterococci was changed from 104 CFU/100mL to 35 CFU/100 mL.
- Updated compliance reporting requirements in 9VAC25-194-70 Part II I Reports of noncompliance;
 - Revised provisions to address online reporting.
- Revised transfer of permit coverage language in 9VAC25-194-70;
 - Part II Y 2 amended for consistency with the VPDES Regulation (9VAC25-31-380, Transfer of Permits) and 40 CFR 122.61(b)(1).

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 9VAC25-194-60 E regarding incomplete Registration Statement submittals. One member questioned what constituted a withdrawal of a registration statement and suggested adding language to clarify this in the regulation. DEQ staff

clarified that an applicant correcting a registration statement and resubmitting it would not constitute a withdrawal. The TAC member also noted that there was a lack of specificity regarding when DEQ would take action to close an incomplete registration statement and suggested adding language to clarify due dates.

TAC members asked for clarification on what constitutes a discharge. DEQ staff explained that in the context of a VPDES permit discharge refers to any point source discharge (any single, identifiable source of pollution) to waters of the Commonwealth and does not include wastewater sent to treatment plants.

TAC members discussed the changes to 9VAC25-194-70 Part II I. One member suggested simplifying the language detailing how reports are required to be submitted. This would help to improve clarity on what is required and what is optional. DEQ staff will review the language to make sure the proposed changes are consistent with other VPDES general permits.

The TAC moved on to discussing the comment received during the NOIRA public comment period which requested consideration of a minimum threshold, below which monitoring would not be required. A TAC member noted that the 0 to 5,000-gallon threshold in the general permit is large and can be impacted not just by water usage, but also by which chemicals were being used. Another TAC member discussed issues with smaller used car dealers that either do not have or choose not to use a washing bay, and instead conduct vehicle washing in their parking lots, which do not have a collection system, which leaves little to no framework in place to monitor them. The TAC member also mentioned that the term “eco-friendly” chemicals can be misleading because the chemicals are not necessarily “friendly” to the receiving body of water, but rather make it easier for wastewater treatment plants to remove them. DEQ staff noted that if there is no discharge to state waters, then no permit is needed. DEQ staff also noted that for permittees under 5,000 gallons they are only required to test once a year.

A TAC member asked DEQ staff how they know if a permittee is over or under the threshold of 5,000 gallons. DEQ staff explained that it is an estimate based on the information provided by the permittee. Permittees are required to certify under law that the information they are reporting is accurate.

TAC members discussed the possibility of adding a third, lower tier of monitoring requirements; this would potentially incentivize permittees to conserve more water and make eco-friendly decisions. The TAC discussed the ways that permittees may be cheating monitoring requirements, such as choosing to wash cars in their parking lot that lack a collection system instead of in wash bays, which prevents monitoring. Solutions discussed included installing more effluent meters for better monitoring and the possibility of a waiver system for opt-in usage of an effluent meter to prove low effluent flows. DEQ staff noted that the burden placed on permittees was taken into consideration when developing regulations. In response to a question from DEQ staff, a TAC member reported that sampling cost roughly \$5,000 over the course of a permit term. DEQ staff asked TAC members to provide more information to help make a recommendation about adding a third tier with reduced monitoring requirements. DEQ staff will research where the threshold of 5,000 gallons per day originated from, how many permittees fall into each tier, and what the standards in other states are.

The TAC then moved to discussing the second comment that was received, after the public comment period. TAC members agreed that the regulation adequately covers golf carts, and that no further amendments were needed.

DEQ staff clarified that permits are only required for facilities that discharge to surface waters. If an alternative is available, facilities are encouraged to pursue that alternative. DEQ has information on the agency website about Best Management Practices (BMPs) for managing wash water to prevent discharge.

DEQ staff provided information about per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). DEQ is currently following federal guidelines and state laws to require certain industrial sectors and possible sources of PFAS to require monitoring for PFAS. TAC members concurred that the general permit should not take a separate approach from what DEQ is currently doing to address PFAS. DEQ staff noted that there will always be an opportunity to amend a regulatory action if needed. TAC members expressed concern about the burden that sampling for PFAS could have on permittees, particularly smaller businesses.

Next Steps:

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

- Present a proposed regulation to the Board to request approval to go to public comment and a hearing;
- With the Board's approval, conduct a 60-day public comment period and hold a public hearing during the comment period;
- Consider any comments received and develop a final regulation;
- Present a final regulation to the Board for approval;
- With the Board's approval, complete a 30-day final notice period; and
- Complete the regulatory action such that the effective date of the new general permit regulation will be January 1, 2028.

Ms. Bilalagic asked the TAC if a second meeting of the TAC is needed or desired. The TAC expressed interest in meeting again to discuss any changes to the draft regulation that may result from this meeting. DEQ requested that the TAC provide any additional information for consideration related to this meeting's discussion topics within the next two weeks. DEQ proposed that the second meeting of the TAC be scheduled for mid-June, 2026. DEQ will follow up with the TAC members shortly to schedule the second meeting.

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: 35 a.m.