

## Final Water Quality Guidance for the Great Lakes System

### Final Rule

Federal Register: March 23, 1995, Page 15365-15366

40 CFR 9, 122, 123, 131, and 132

**SUMMARY:** EPA is publishing Final Water Quality Guidance for the Great Lakes System. Great Lakes States and Tribes will use the water quality criteria, methodologies, policies, and procedures in the Guidance to establish consistent, enforceable, long-term protection for fish and shellfish in the Great Lakes and their tributaries, as well as for the people and wildlife who consume them.

The Guidance was initially developed by the Great Lakes States, EPA, and other Federal agencies in open dialogue with citizens, local governments, and industries in the Great Lakes ecosystem. It will affect all types of pollutants, but will target especially the types of long-lasting pollutants that accumulate in the food web of large lakes.

The Guidance consists of water quality criteria for 29 pollutants to protect aquatic life, wildlife, and human health, and detailed methodologies to develop criteria for additional pollutants; implementation procedures to develop more consistent, enforceable water quality-based effluent limits in discharge permits, as well as total maximum daily loads of pollutants that can be allowed to reach the Lakes and their tributaries from all sources; and antidegradation policies and procedures.

Under the Clean Water Act, the States of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin must adopt provisions into their water quality standards and NPDES permit programs within two years (by March 23, 1997) that are consistent with the Guidance, or EPA will promulgate the provisions for them. The Guidance for the Great Lakes System will help establish consistent, enforceable, long-term protection from all types of pollutants, but will place short-term emphasis on the types of long-lasting pollutants that accumulate in the food web and pose a threat to the Great Lakes System. The Guidance includes minimum water quality criteria, antidegradation policies, and implementation procedures that provide a coordinated ecosystem approach for addressing existing and possible pollutant problems and improves consistency in water quality standards and permitting procedures in the Great Lakes System. In addition, the Guidance provisions help establish consistent goals or minimum requirements for Remedial Action Plans (RAPs) and Lakewide Management Plans (LaMPs) that are critical to the success of international multi-media efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes ecosystem.

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