

Explanatory paragraph: This is an amendment to 20.6.4 NMAC, Sections 7 and 8, effective August 1, 2007 . The purpose of the amendment is to allow temporary and short-term degradation in outstanding national resource waters under limited circumstances. The amendment includes the insertion of one new definition into the list of alphabetized definitions in 20.6.4.7 NMAC. The other definitions remain unchanged, except for assigning new letters to the subsections following the new definition.

20.6.4.7 DEFINITIONS: Terms defined in the New Mexico Water Quality Act, but not defined in this part will have the meaning given in the Water Quality Act.

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S. “Designated management agency” means an agency as defined by 40 CFR Section 130.9(d).

[20.6.4.7 NMAC - Rp 20 NMAC 6.1.1007, 10-12-00; A, 7-19-01; A, 05-23-05; A, 07-17-05; A, 08-01-07]

20.6.4.8 ANTIDegradation Policy and Implementation Plan:

A. Antidegradation Policy: This antidegradation policy applies to all surface waters of the state.

(1) Existing instream water uses and the level of water quality necessary to protect the existing uses shall be maintained and protected in all surface waters of the state.

(2) Where the quality of a surface water of the state exceeds levels necessary to support the propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife, and recreation in and on the water, that quality shall be maintained and protected unless the commission finds, after full satisfaction of the intergovernmental coordination and public participation provisions of the state’s continuing planning process, that allowing lower water quality is necessary to accommodate important economic and social development in the area in which the water is located. In allowing such degradation or lower water quality, the state shall assure water quality adequate to protect existing uses fully. Further, the state shall assure that there shall be achieved the highest statutory and regulatory requirements for all new and existing point sources and all cost-effective and reasonable BMPs for nonpoint source control. Additionally, the state shall encourage the use of watershed planning as a further means to protect surface waters of the state.

(3) No degradation shall be allowed in [high quality] waters designated by the commission as outstanding national resource waters (ONRWs), except as provided in Subparagraphs (a) through (e) of this paragraph.

(a) Temporary and short-term degradation of water quality shall be allowed only when such degradation can be shown to result in restoration or maintenance of the chemical, physical or biological integrity of the ONRW and is consistent with the objectives in 20.6.4.6 NMAC and with the purposes for which the commission designated the ONRW.

(b) Temporary and short-term degradation of water quality that complies with Subparagraph (a) of this paragraph shall be limited to the shortest possible time and last no longer than 12 months, unless approved by the commission.

(c) Temporary and short-term degradation shall only be approved on a case-by-case basis by the commission, the department or a designated management agency as appropriate. Temporary and short-term degradation resulting from applications under 20.6.4.16 NMAC shall be considered and may be approved by the commission. All other temporary and short-term degradation shall be considered and may be approved by the department or by a designated management agency pursuant to a commission-approved memorandum of agreement between the department and the designated management agency. In approving temporary and short-term degradation, the commission, the department or the designated management agency shall consider and minimize the frequency and cumulative effects of such degradation. The approval of temporary and short-term degradation shall not result in permanent degradation of water quality in the ONRW or in water quality lower than necessary to protect existing uses in the ONRW and shall not alter the essential character or special use that makes the water an ONRW.

(d) In implementing activities that may result in temporary and short-term degradation of water quality, all practical means of minimizing such temporary and short-term degradation shall be utilized.

(e) Preexisting land-use activities allowed by federal or state law prior to designation as an ONRW, and controlled by best management practices (BMPs), shall be allowed to continue so long as there are no new or increased discharges resulting from the activity after designation of the ONRW.

(4) In those cases where potential water quality impairment associated with a thermal discharge is involved, this antidegradation policy and implementing method shall be consistent with Section 316 of the federal Clean Water Act.

(5) In implementing this section, the commission through the appropriate regional offices of the United States environmental protection agency will keep the administrator advised and provided with such information concerning the surface waters of the state as he or she will need to discharge his or her responsibilities under the federal Clean Water Act.

B. Implementation Plan: The department, acting under authority delegated by the commission, implements the water quality standards, including the antidegradation policy, by describing specific methods and procedures in the continuing planning process and by establishing and maintaining controls on the discharge of pollutants to surface waters of the state. The steps summarized in the following paragraphs, which may not all be applicable in every water pollution control action, list the implementation activities of the department. These implementation activities are supplemented by detailed antidegradation review procedures developed under the state's continuing planning process. The department:

(1) obtains information pertinent to the impact of the effluent on the receiving water and advises the prospective discharger of requirements for obtaining a permit to discharge;

(2) reviews the adequacy of existing data and conducts a water quality survey of the receiving water in accordance with an annually reviewed, ranked priority list of surface waters of the state requiring total maximum daily loads pursuant to Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act;

(3) assesses the probable impact of the effluent on the receiving water relative to its attainable or designated uses and numeric and narrative criteria;

(4) requires the highest and best degree of wastewater treatment practicable and commensurate with protecting and maintaining the designated uses and existing water quality of surface waters of the state;

(5) develops water quality based effluent limitations and comments on technology based effluent limitations, as appropriate, for inclusion in any federal permit issued to a discharger pursuant to Section 402 of the federal Clean Water Act;

(6) requires that these effluent limitations be included in any such permit as a condition for state certification pursuant to Section 401 of the federal Clean Water Act;

(7) coordinates its water pollution control activities with other constituent agencies of the commission, and with local, state and federal agencies, as appropriate;

(8) develops and pursues inspection and enforcement programs to ensure that dischargers comply with state regulations and standards, and complements EPA's enforcement of federal permits;

(9) ensures that the provisions for public participation required by the New Mexico Water Quality Act and the federal Clean Water Act are followed;

(10) provides continuing technical training for wastewater treatment facility operators through the utility operators training and certification programs;

(11) provides funds to assist the construction of publicly owned wastewater treatment facilities through the wastewater construction program authorized by Section 601 of the federal Clean Water Act, and through funds appropriated by the New Mexico legislature;

(12) conducts water quality surveillance of the surface waters of the state to assess the effectiveness of water pollution controls, determines whether water quality standards are being attained, and proposes amendments to improve water quality standards;

(13) encourages, in conjunction with other state agencies, implementation of the best management practices set forth in the New Mexico statewide water quality management plan and the nonpoint source management program, such implementation shall not be mandatory except as provided by federal or state law;

(14) evaluates the effectiveness of BMPs selected to prevent, reduce or abate sources of water pollutants;

(15) develops procedures for assessing use attainment as required by 20.6.4.15 NMAC and establishing site-specific standards; and

(16) develops list of surface waters of the state not attaining designated uses, pursuant to Sections 305(b) and 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act.

[20.6.4.8 NMAC - Rp 20 NMAC 6.1.1101, 10-12-00; A, 05-23-05; A, 08-01-07]