



**FOR RELEASE:** October 13, 2011  
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## Ohio EPA Clarifies Water Quality Trading Rules

Updates to a program that allows voluntary trading of water quality pollution credits are being considered by Ohio EPA as part of a five-year rule review. Public comments on draft rules are sought through October 25, 2011.

Water quality trading is a voluntary program, typically undertaken by wastewater treatment plants, that allows dischargers to use pollutant reduction credits to offset reductions required by their permits. The credits may be generated by another wastewater treatment plant or by a nonpoint source. The goal of the program is to improve water quality and minimize the cost of achieving and maintaining water quality standards.

Trading is based on the idea that sources in a watershed can face very different costs to control the same pollutant. The program encourages trading water quality credits for nutrients, sediments and other pollutants where opportunities exist to achieve water quality improvements.

Specific rule changes being considered include:

- using a water quality credit would not cause or contribute to a violation of water quality standards;
- load reductions funded through Ohio EPA's Water Resource Restoration Sponsorship Program (WRRSP) would not be eligible for water quality credits;
- adjusting the size of hydrologic unit codes to make them consistent with other programs to identify areas where potential nonpoint source projects are located; and
- allowing compliance provisions that clarify responsibilities in each discharge permit when a permittee participates in water quality trading.

[Copies of the draft rules](#) are available from Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water by contacting Melinda Harris at (614) 644-2745. Written comments can be mailed by October 25, to Ohio EPA, Division of Surface Water Rules Coordinator, P.O. Box 1049, Columbus, Ohio 43216-1049, or emailed to [dsw\\_rulecomments@epa.state.oh.us](mailto:dsw_rulecomments@epa.state.oh.us).

Ohio EPA will consider all comments before it formally proposes rule changes. When the rules are formally proposed, Ohio EPA will hold a public hearing and offer another public comment period before any rule changes are adopted.