

Environmental Protection Agency

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the public notice of a draft permit and a summary of any significant comments presented at any hearing on any draft permit, except those comments regarding permits for which permit review has been waived under § 123.24(d) and for which EPA has not otherwise requested receipt, if:

(i) The Regional Administrator requests this information; or

(ii) The proposed permit contains requirements significantly different from those contained in the tentative determination and draft permit; or

(iii) Significant comments objecting to the tentative determination and draft permit have been presented at the hearing or in writing pursuant to the public notice.

(d) Any State permit program shall keep such records and submit to the Administrator such information as the Administrator may reasonably require to ascertain whether the State program complies with the requirements of CWA or of this part.

[48 FR 14178, Apr. 1, 1983, as amended at 60 FR 33931, June 29, 1995; 64 FR 42470, Aug. 4, 1999]

§ 123.44 EPA review of and objections to State permits.

(a)(1) The Memorandum of Agreement shall provide a period of time (up to 90 days from receipt of proposed permits) to which the Regional Administrator may make general comments upon, objections to, or recommendations with respect to proposed permits. EPA reserves the right to take 90 days to supply specific grounds for objection, notwithstanding any shorter period specified in the Memorandum of Agreement, when a general objection is filed within the review period specified in the Memorandum of Agreement. The Regional Administrator shall send a copy of any comment, objection or recommendation to the permit applicant.

(2) In the case of general permits, EPA shall have 90 days from the date of receipt of the proposed general permit to comment upon, object to or make recommendations with respect to the proposed general permit, and is not bound by any shorter time limits set by the Memorandum of Agreement for general comments, objections or recommendations.

(b)(1) Within the period of time provided under the Memorandum of Agreement for making general comments upon, objections to or recommendations with respect to proposed permits, the Regional Administrator shall notify the State Director of any objection to issuance of a proposed permit (except as provided in paragraph (a)(2) of this section for proposed general permits). This notification shall set forth in writing the general nature of the objection.

(2) Within 90 days following receipt of a proposed permit to which he or she has objected under paragraph (b)(1) of this section, or in the case of general permits within 90 days after receipt of the proposed general permit, the Regional Administrator shall set forth in writing and transmit to the State Director:

(i) A statement of the reasons for the objection (including the section of CWA or regulations that support the objection), and

(ii) The actions that must be taken by the State Director to eliminate the objection (including the effluent limitations and conditions which the permit would include if it were issued by the Regional Administrator.)

NOTE: Paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section, in effect, modify any existing agreement between EPA and the State which provides less than 90 days for EPA to supply the specific grounds for an objection. However, when an agreement provides for an EPA review period of less than 90 days, EPA must file a general objection, in accordance with paragraph (b)(1) of this section within the time specified in the agreement. This general objection must be followed by a specific objection within the 90-day period. This modification to MOA's allows EPA to provide detailed information concerning acceptable permit conditions, as required by section 402(d) of CWA. To avoid possible confusion, MOA's should be changed to reflect this arrangement.

(c) The Regional Administrator's objection to the issuance of a proposed permit must be based upon one or more of the following grounds:

(1) The permit fails to apply, or to ensure compliance with, any applicable requirement of this part;

NOTE: For example, the Regional Administrator may object to a permit not requiring the achievement of required effluent limitations by applicable statutory deadlines.

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(2) In the case of a proposed permit for which notification to the Administrator is required under section 402(b)(5) of CWA, the written recommendations of an affected State have not been accepted by the permitting State and the Regional Administrator finds the reasons for rejecting the recommendations are inadequate;

(3) The procedures followed in connection with formulation of the proposed permit failed in a material respect to comply with procedures required by CWA or by regulations thereunder or by the Memorandum of Agreement;

(4) Any finding made by the State Director in connection with the proposed permit misinterprets CWA or any guidelines or regulations under CWA, or misapplies them to the facts;

(5) Any provisions of the proposed permit relating to the maintenance of records, reporting, monitoring, sampling, or the provision of any other information by the permittee are inadequate, in the judgment of the Regional Administrator, to assure compliance with permit conditions, including effluent standards and limitations or standards for sewage sludge use and disposal required by CWA, by the guidelines and regulations issued under CWA, or by the proposed permit;

(6) In the case of any proposed permit with respect to which applicable effluent standards and limitations or standards for sewage sludge use and disposal under sections 301, 302, 306, 307, 318, 403, and 405 of CWA have not yet been promulgated by the Agency, the proposed permit, in the judgment of the Regional Administrator, fails to carry out the provisions of CWA or of any regulations issued under CWA; the provisions of this paragraph apply to determinations made pursuant to §125.3(c)(2) in the absence of applicable guidelines, to best management practices under section 304(e) of CWA, which must be incorporated into permits as requirements under section 301, 306, 307, 318, 403 or 405, and to sewage sludge use and disposal requirements developed on a case-by-case basis pursuant to section 405(d) of CWA, as the case may be;

(7) Issuance of the proposed permit would in any other respect be outside

the requirements of CWA, or regulations issued under CWA.

(8) The effluent limits of a permit fail to satisfy the requirements of 40 CFR 122.44(d).

(9) For a permit issued by a Great Lakes State or Tribe (as defined in 40 CFR 132.2), the permit does not satisfy the conditions promulgated by the State, Tribe, or EPA pursuant to 40 CFR part 132.

(d) Prior to notifying the State Director of an objection based upon any of the grounds set forth in paragraph (c) of this section, the Regional Administrator:

(1) Will consider all data transmitted pursuant to §123.43 (or, in the case of a sewage sludge management program, §501.21 of this chapter);

(2) May, if the information provided is inadequate to determine whether the proposed permit meets the guidelines and requirements of CWA, request the State Director to transmit to the Regional Administrator the complete record of the permit proceedings before the State, or any portions of the record that the Regional Administrator determines are necessary for review. If this request is made within 30 days of receipt of the State submittal under §123.43 (or, in the case of a sewage sludge management program, §501.21 of this chapter), it will constitute an interim objection to the issuance of the permit, and the full period of time specified in the Memorandum of Agreement for the Regional Administrator's review will recommence when the Regional Administrator has received such record or portions of the record; and

(3) May, in his or her discretion, and to the extent feasible within the period of time available under the Memorandum of Agreement, afford to interested persons an opportunity to comment on the basis for the objection;

(e) Within 90 days of receipt by the State Director of an objection by the Regional Administrator, the State or interstate agency or any interested person may request that a public hearing be held by the Regional Administrator on the objection. A public hearing in accordance with the procedures of §124.12 (c) and (d) of this chapter (or, in the case of a sewage sludge management program, §501.15(d)(7) of this

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chapter) will be held, and public notice provided in accordance with §124.10 of this chapter, (or, in the case of a sewage sludge management program, §501.15(d)(5) of this chapter), whenever requested by the State or the interstate agency which proposed the permit or if warranted by significant public interest based on requests received.

(f) A public hearing held under paragraph (e) of this section shall be conducted by the Regional Administrator, and, at the Regional Administrator's discretion, with the assistance of an EPA panel designated by the Regional Administrator, in an orderly and expeditious manner.

(g) Following the public hearing, the Regional Administrator shall reaffirm the original objection, modify the terms of the objection, or withdraw the objection, and shall notify the State of this decision.

(h)(1) If no public hearing is held under paragraph (e) of this section and the State does not resubmit a permit revised to meet the Regional Administrator's objection within 90 days of receipt of the objection, the Regional Administrator may issue the permit in accordance with parts 121, 122 and 124 of this chapter and any other guidelines and requirements of CWA.

(2) If a public hearing is held under paragraph (e) of this section, the Regional Administrator does not withdraw the objection, and the State does not resubmit a permit revised to meet the Regional Administrator's objection or modified objection within 30 days of the date of the Regional Administrator's notification under paragraph (g) of this section, the Regional Administrator may issue the permit in accordance with parts 121, 122 and 124 of this chapter and any other guidelines and requirements of CWA.

(3) Exclusive authority to issue the permit passes to EPA when the times set out in this paragraph expire.

(i) [Reserved]

(j) The Regional Administrator may agree, in the Memorandum of Agreement under §123.24 (or, in the case of a sewage sludge management program, §501.14 of this chapter), to review draft permits rather than proposed permits. In such a case, a proposed permit need not be prepared by the State and trans-

mitted to the Regional Administrator for review in accordance with this section unless the State proposes to issue a permit which differs from the draft permit reviewed by the Regional Administrator, the Regional Administrator has objected to the draft permit, or there is significant public comment.

[48 FR 14178, Apr. 1, 1983, as amended at 54 FR 18785, May 2, 1989; 54 FR 23896, June 2, 1989; 60 FR 15386, Mar. 23, 1995; 63 FR 45122, Aug. 24, 1998; 65 FR 30910, May 15, 2000]

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 65 FR 43661, July 13, 2000, §123.44 was amended by adding paragraph (k), effective 30 days after the date that Congress allows EPA to implement this regulation. At 66 FR 53048, Oct. 18, 2001 this amendment was made effective April 30, 2003. For the convenience of the user, the added text is set forth as follows:

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(k)(1) Where a State fails to submit a new draft or proposed permit to EPA within 90 days after the expiration of the existing permit, EPA may review the administratively-continued permit, using the procedure described in paragraphs (a)(1) through (h)(3) of this section, if:

(i) The administratively-continued permit allows the discharge of pollutant(s) into a waterbody for which EPA has established or approved a TMDL and the permit is not consistent with an applicable wasteload allocation; or

(ii) The administratively-continued permit allows the discharge of a pollutant(s) of concern into a waterbody that does not attain and maintain water quality standards and for which EPA has not established or approved a TMDL.

(2) To review an expired and administratively-continued permit under this paragraph (k) EPA must give the State and the discharger at least 90 days written notice of its intent to consider the expired permit as a proposed permit. At any time beginning 90 days after permit expiration, EPA may submit this notice.

(3) If the State submits a draft or proposed permit for EPA review at any time before EPA issues the permit under paragraph (h) of this section, EPA will withdraw its notice of intent to take permit authority under this paragraph (k) and will evaluate the draft or proposed permit under this section.