

Jim Havard – EPA – June 2024 Breakout discussion on Approaches to Monitoring, Assessment, and Plans in a Changing Climate

303(d) Program Vision 2.0 -- Climate Change Focus Area Annotated*

EPA is committed to integrating climate adaptation planning into the Agency's programs, policies, and rulemaking processes. The objective of the Climate Change Focus Area is to consider strategically how to account for the impacts of climate change, and address climate resiliency or vulnerability, in water quality assessment, impaired waters listing, and the development of TMDLs and other plans consistent with water quality standards. Examining the potential impact of changing climate conditions on CWA Section 303(d) program activities will often involve unique considerations depending on regional, local, or project-specific conditions. Actions taken to address climate change in CWA Section 303(d) program activities can be implemented with a focus on communities already experiencing disproportionately high adverse impacts (consistent with EPA's commitment to environmental justice) and considering efforts already underway by states, territories, and tribes.

EPA will collaborate with interested partners to further incorporate consideration of the impacts of changing climate conditions into program operations. Opportunities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Consider impacts of climate change on water quality in identifying impaired and threatened waters; [See, e.g., 2024 IR Memo](#); [Upcoming Climate-TMDL paper](#).
- Identify and utilize tools/resources that support prioritization of waters that may be particularly susceptible to changing climate conditions for protection and restoration; [See, e.g., RPS including climate related indicators](#); [Upcoming Climate-TMDL paper](#).
- Consider the impact of changing environmental conditions when developing and implementing TMDLs, and other restoration and protection plans; and the ability of plans to achieve and maintain water quality standards; [See, e.g., 2024 IR Memo](#); [Upcoming Climate-TMDL paper](#); [ELI summary of state case examples](#); [National Training presentations](#); [Hazard Mitigation trainings and learning module](#); [Climate and BMP paper](#) by OW/ORD.
- Build program capacity to highlight or develop products and/or approaches (including TMDLs, modeling methods, reasonable assurance, implementation plans, etc.) that are robust and adaptive when facing uncertain conditions; [See, e.g., Upcoming Climate-TMDL paper](#); [ELI summary of state case examples](#).
- Target program resources and staff capacity towards areas and communities most impacted by changing climate conditions; [See, e.g., Upcoming Climate-TMDL Paper](#); [Watershed Academy](#); and

- Engage the public and other stakeholders using available public processes to inform, solicit feedback, and enable constructive discourse to address impacts of climate change on CWA Section 303(d) program activities transparently and clearly. See, e.g., 2024 IR Memo; State Prioritization Frameworks; Watershed Academy (including upcoming EJ Modules); Stakeholder meetings (including on the Vision focus area).

EPA will promote opportunities through case studies, tools, and guidance as appropriate.

Note on 303(d) and EPA's Climate Adaptation Implementation Plan (CAIP). EPA made commitments as part of the CAIP, both previous FY 22/23 and upcoming FY 24/25, which included the TMDL Climate white paper, 2024 IR memo, national training sessions and stakeholder meetings.

Note on monitoring and the 303(d) program. At least three bins of needs: monitoring for assessment; monitoring for development of TMDLs and other plans; monitoring to determine success of implementation activities.

*Some examples of activities and areas of emphasis are in red; we welcome additional examples or ideas.