



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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### DEQ seeking feedback on prioritization framework under the Clean Water Act

BATON ROUGE – The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is collaborating with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on a long-term vision for assessment, restoration and protection under the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 303(d) Program.

Currently, impaired waters on the CWA 303(d) list are prioritized for Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) development to establish allocations for both point and nonpoint sources of water pollution. These TMDLs help water bodies meet their designated uses and water quality goals. While TMDLs may be more appropriate for some water bodies, others may more immediately benefit from alternative strategies to help achieve these goals. Under the new vision of the CWA 303(d) Program, Louisiana and other states will be able to utilize lessons learned from the past two decades of CWA 303(d) Program implementation and address new challenges with innovative solutions. The new vision of the CWA 303(d) Program will allow states to define priorities for restoration and protection activities. This allows states to implement alternatives to TMDL to move straight from impairment to implementation. A new measure of success, based on the individual states' defined priorities and a projected percentage of completion, will be part of the new vision.

DEQ has prepared a document titled *"DRAFT-Prioritization Framework: A State Plan for Prioritizing Watersheds for Restoration and Protection in Louisiana"* that provides a draft framework for prioritization under the new vision of the CWA 303(d) Program. DEQ will receive feedback on the draft prioritization framework through 4:30 p.m. CST Friday, May 1, 2015. The draft document and instructions for submitting feedback are available through the DEQ Web page

<http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/DIVISIONS/WaterPermits/CWA303dVisionProgram.aspx>.