



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION III
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029

FEB 05 2015

Mr. D. Lee Currey, Director
Science Services Administration
Maryland Department of the Environment
1800 Washington Blvd., Suite 540
Baltimore, Maryland 21230-1718

Dear Mr. Currey:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region III, has reviewed the report *Water Quality Analysis of Mercury in Fish Tissue in Rocky Gorge Reservoir in Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's Counties, Maryland*, which was submitted by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) for final review on December 4, 2014. MDE has identified Rocky Gorge Reservoir (Assessment Unit ID: MD-021311070941-Rocky_Gorge_Reservoir) on the State's 2012 Integrated Report for impacts to biological communities in 1st- through 4th-order streams in the watershed (2004), mercury in fish tissue (2010) and nutrients (1998). A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for phosphorus in Rocky Gorge Reservoir was approved by the EPA in 2008. The listing for impacts to biological communities will be addressed at a future date.

EPA agrees with MDE's analysis of the data that shows that the Rocky Gorge Reservoir is not impaired due to mercury in fish tissue and consequently, a TMDL is not necessary. EPA recommended and Maryland adopted a numeric criterion concentration of methylmercury in fish tissue of 300.0 micrograms per kilogram ($\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$). The Rocky Gorge Reservoir mercury impairment was evaluated by collecting two, five-fish composite samples of trophic-level four fish (largemouth bass) from the Rocky Gorge Reservoir in September 2013 and analyzing them for total mercury fish tissue concentrations. The composite samples had a median mercury concentration (281.8 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$) that was below MDE's numeric criterion for the protection of human health via fish consumption. In addition to the composite samples, individual samples of the fish tissue were also tested. Total mercury in fish tissue concentrations for eight of ten individual fish tissue samples were also less than MDE's criterion. Therefore, the "fishable" designated use of the Rocky Gorge Reservoir is not impaired due to mercury in fish tissue.





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Thank you for the opportunity to review the WQA. If you should have any questions, please contact Ms. Helene Drago, TMDL Program Manager, at 215-814-5796.

Sincerely,

Signed

 Jon M. Capacasa, Director
Water Protection Division 

cc: Melissa Chatham, MDE-SSA