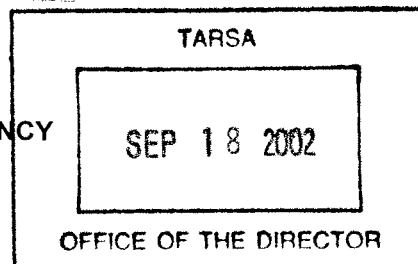




UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION III
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029



Mr. Robin Grove, Director
Technical and Regulatory Services Administration
Maryland Department of the Environment
2500 Broening Highway
Baltimore, MD 21224

SEP 16 2002

Dear Mr. Grove:

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region III has reviewed the report entitled, "Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) of Carbonaceous Biochemical Oxygen Demand (CBOD) and Nitrogenous Biochemical Oxygen Demand (NBOD) for Antietam Creek, Washington County, Maryland." The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) submitted the report for final EPA review on December 27, 2001, and submitted additional information on March 20, 2002 in response to EPA's comments. Antietam Creek was identified on Maryland's 1996 and 1998 Section 303(d) lists as impaired by nutrients, suspended sediments, and low dissolved oxygen.

EPA has determined that a dissolved oxygen TMDL is not necessary for Antietam Creek at this time, and considers MDE's report as a water quality analysis, based on the following: (1) water quality data collected from Antietam Creek in 1996-1997 indicate that the dissolved oxygen standard is currently being met; and (2) the Hagerstown Fiber Limited Partnership waste water treatment plant (permit number MD0066974), a significant discharger of BOD, is currently off-line.

EPA concurs with MDE's assertion in the report that increased loadings of CBOD and NBOD beyond the current allowable point source loadings and current background conditions in Antietam Creek could lead to a violation of the dissolved oxygen water quality standard. Thus, EPA recommends that MDE retain Antietam Creek on its current 303(d) list for dissolved oxygen. Further, should the Hagerstown Fiber Limited Partnership WWTP return to on-line status in the future, then MDE should resubmit the report as a TMDL for EPA review and approval. Also, this water quality analysis does not include the other impairments to Antietam Creek (i.e., nutrients, suspended sediments), which MDE is to address at a later date.



If you have any questions, please contact me at (215) 814-5715 or Thomas Henry at (215) 814-5752.

Sincerely,



Joseph T. Piotrowski, Associate Director
Water Protection Division

cc: Jim George, MDE