

**Comment Response Document**  
**Regarding the Water Quality Analysis of Mercury in Fish Tissue in Rocky Gorge Reservoir in Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's Counties, Maryland**

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has conducted a public review of the Water Quality Analysis of Mercury in Fish Tissue in Rocky Gorge Reservoir in Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's Counties, Maryland. The public comment period was open from October 2, 2014 through October 31, 2014. MDE received one set of written comments.

The commentors, their affiliations, the date comments were submitted, and the numbered references to the comments submitted are identified below. In the pages that follow, comments are summarized and listed with MDE's response.

**List of Commentors**

| <b>Author</b>                | <b>Affiliation</b>  | <b>Date</b>      | <b>Comment Number</b> |
|------------------------------|---|------------------|-----------------------|
| Ulder J. Tillman,<br>MD, MPH | Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services | October 30, 2014 | 1-2                   |

**Comments and Responses**

1. The commentor thanks MDE for the opportunity to comment on the WQA. The commentor continues stating based on the information available at this time and in keeping with their mission and safety of County residents, the Montgomery County Dept. of Health and Human Services wishes to encourage MDE to educate and inform residents through posting or disseminating educational materials about the safe consumption of freshwater fish and the health effects of mercury exposure or ingestion in conjunction with any change in the status of the reservoir based on the report's findings. Specifically to include the United States Food and Drug Administration brochure "What You Need To Know About Mercury in Fish and Shellfish" at <http://www.fda.gov/food/resourcesforyou/consumers/ucm110591.htm> and United States Environmental Protection Agency's Health Advisory "Fish Consumption Advice" at <http://www.epa.gov/mercury/advisories.htm>.

**Response:** MDE's Environmental Assessment and Standards Program manages the outreach and communication of Fish Consumption Advisories. MDE has an entire section of its website dedicated to Fish Consumption Advisories which includes links to documents similar to the information the commentor has requested to be posted. The link is available from MDE's homepage or directly here: <http://www.mde.state.md.us/programs/Marylander/CitizensInfoCenterHome/Pages/citizensinfocenter/fishandshellfish/index.aspx>. If the commentor has suggestions on how to better reach its constituents, the commentor should contact the Environmental Assessment and Standards Program at 410-537-3906 or email Mr. John Backus at [john.backus@maryland.gov](mailto:john.backus@maryland.gov).

2. The commentor additionally encourages MDE to provide documentation to residents in plain language that targets a more general (non-technical) audience to explain the process of

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monitoring these reservoirs (including what best practices/standards are being applied to evaluate their quality), the results obtained from the analysis and consequences that resulted in the proposed change in status.

**Response:** Maryland's waters are routinely monitored and assessed through the Water Quality Assessment Report process. This process is where the change in status from impaired to not impaired for mercury would occur. For more information about this process, please see: <http://www.mde.state.md.us/integratedreport303d>. Please see also the response to Comment #1 regarding communicating with the commentor's constituents.