



March 11, 2014

The Honorable E. Christopher Abruzzo
Chairperson, Environmental Quality Board
Secretary of Environmental Protection
16th Floor, Rachel Carson State Office Building
400 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101
cabruzzo@pa.gov

Re: Co-petitioner Request to Table Petition Report at EQB Meeting and give 6-12 months

Dear Secretary Abruzzo:

First, on behalf of the more than 120 petitioners requesting to upgrade the designation of the Upper Perkiomen Creek, let me say thank you to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for the time and effort it has put into the Upper Perkiomen upgrade petition, and for your assistance in tabling the Upper Perkiomen report from the February Environmental Quality Board (EQB) agenda.

At this time, we are reaching out to ask that you again table the Upper Perkiomen petition and DEP final report from the upcoming March 18, 2014 EQB agenda to give the co-petitioners additional time, ideally 12 months, to supplement the data collected for the Upper Perkiomen by the DEP in 2007. The co-petitioners understand such a delay has been permitted for other redesignation petitions previously in advance of DEP final determinations (e.g., Tohickon Creek), and we would like the same consideration for the large community that relies upon and lives within the Upper Perkiomen watershed area.

We do acknowledge, based on DEP's analysis, that some stream segments of the Upper Perkiomen will not likely qualify to secure the High Quality (HQ) designation on macroinvertebrate metrics alone, but we also believe that targeted areas, especially related to important trout populations, may have qualify to secure the HQ designation, at which point other qualifiers could be examined to determine if Exceptional Value (EV) is possible.

If given more time to collect additional science, the co-petitioners will investigate water chemistry for portions of the Basin that may not have the fish biomass needed to secure the HQ designation. Under DEP's anti-degradation guidance, at least 12 months of data are needed for that analysis so providing this timeframe for the co-petitioners is very much needed in order for us to follow DEP's own procedures.

DELAWARE RIVERKEEPER NETWORK
925 Canal Street, Suite 3701
Bristol, PA 19007
Office: (215) 369-1188
fax: (215) 369-1181
drm@delawareriverkeeper.org
www.delawareriverkeeper.org

This additional 12 months period would not currently change anything for the Upper Perkiomen region, since DEP proposed to recommend that all stream retain their current designations. The petition was submitted in 2007 so another six to 12 months seems a reasonable request considering the amount of effort that has already gone into this region by the DEP and the community.

In addition, since February, we have seen additional outpouring of support for the Upper Perkiomen petition and a call for more science to be collected in the region (see attached letters from Senator Pat Brown, Senator Bob Mensch, and Representative Simmons). The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) has also recognized there are likely specific segments of the Upper Perkiomen that may have important trout waters, and PFBC is planning to sample parts of the Upper Perkiomen in 2014 (see attached PFBC correspondence). In addition, Lower Milford Township has committed to additional data collection in 2014 in support of the petition. As DEP recognized in their response document to co-petitioner comments on the draft report, there are not enough DEP resources to perform additional sampling so these various entities have agreed to help with data collection partnering with the DEP if given the opportunity and time now to do so. Then all data can be reviewed as part of the DEP's study to ensure the merits of the petition are given full and fair consideration. This outpouring of community support to help protect the Upper Perkiomen Basin also shows the value that the waterbodies of the region have for local townships and the community. The additional time for science would also eliminate the need to come back before the EQB again, should the PFBC designate any of the waters to be studied as a Class A Wild Trout stream.

For these reasons, we hope you grant the co-petitioners request for more time so we can work with the DEP to ensure additional data is collected. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Maya K. van Rossum
the Delaware Riverkeeper

William McFadden
District Manager
Lehigh County Conservation District

Charles MacDonald
President
Perkiomen Valley Trout Unlimited, Chapter #332

Andrew Meadows
Board Vice-Chair
Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy

cc: Tony Shaw, Department of Environmental Protection
Laura Fusare Edinger, Regulatory Coordinator, Policy Office