

New York's Proposed Language for Accounting for Climate Change in the Jurisdictions' Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan

Climate Change

As you may recall, New York abstained from the vote on moving forward on the approach initially proposed at the December PSC meeting until we undertook some more analysis. Generally, NY is: (1) supportive of incorporating Climate Change in to the Phase III WIPs; (2) supportive of the Phase 6 model and modeling process; and (3) is of the opinion that increased pollutant reduction targets need to be accompanied by a specific program to meet the targets and a technical workgroup to develop improved management practices to address climate change realities. Therefore, in advance of the March 2nd, 2018 PSC meeting I wanted to provide New York's recommendations regarding factoring in climate change to the Phase III WIPs.

Moving forward, New York State agrees that, at this stage, it is appropriate to incorporate a narrative strategy establishing programmatic plans to address climate change. These strategies will align with existing climate resiliency plans that incorporate local priorities for each jurisdiction. (ex. climate smart farming program and climate smart communities program). However, we do not believe the initial Phase III WIPs should include specific numeric load allocations until 2021 as we also need to determine: (1) the best approach moving forward; (2) the effect of climate change on our existing BMPs; and (3) what climate resilient BMPs are needed to meet any future load allocations. Once we understand this collective information, we will be in a better position to develop appropriate load allocations, programs and funding allocations for each jurisdiction.

Factoring Climate Change Considerations into the Phase III Watershed Implementation Plans

1. Incorporate Climate Change in the Phase III WIPs

- ~~Include a narrative strategy in the Phase III WIPs that describes the state and local jurisdictions' current action plans and strategies to address climate change, as well as the jurisdiction-specific nutrient and sediment pollution loadings due to 2025 climate change conditions, and commit to adopting climate change allocations by 2021, employing the climate change model and other relevant local information.~~

2. Understand the Science

- ~~Address the uncertainty by documenting the current~~Continue to sharpen the understanding of the science, impacts of climate change, and identifying research gaps and needs.
- Develop an estimate of pollutant load changes (nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment) due to 2025 climate change conditions.

- Develop a better understanding of BMP responses, including new enhanced and resilient ~~or other emerging~~ BMPs, to better address climate change conditions such as increased storm intensity.
- In 2021, the Partnership will consider results of updated methods, techniques, and studies and determine estimated loads due to climate change for each jurisdiction ~~to determine if any updates to those load estimates are needed~~.
- In 2021 Jurisdictions will ~~be expected to~~ account for additional nutrient and sediment pollutant loads due to 2025 climate change conditions in a Phase III WIP addendum and/or 2-year milestones beginning in 2022.

3. Incorporate into Milestones

- Starting with the 2022-2023 milestones, the Partnership will determine how climate change will impact the BMPs included in the WIPs and address these vulnerabilities in the two-year milestones.