



September 29, 2017

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality  
Attn: Standard Implementation Team, MC-150  
P.O. Box 13087  
Austin, Texas 78711-3087

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WATER QUALITY DIVISION  
TCEQ

Re: Request for Stakeholder Comments on TCEQ Draft Thermal Procedures

Dear Standard Implementations Team,

The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) appreciates the opportunity to review the draft Thermal Procedures document in support of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's (TCEQ's) development of temperature screening procedures for use in the Texas Pollutants Discharge Elimination (TPDES) permits.

Comment 1: LCRA supports the TCEQ goal for TPDES permits to be screened for potential temperature impacts to receiving streams. LCRA understands that these procedures are the first draft of a temperature screening process that is very complex and that the basis for these procedures will continue to expand with additional literature review, data collection, the comprehensive review of other states' approaches, and the maturation of the process. In view of the complex and evolving nature of these procedures, LCRA recommends that TCEQ provide a statement that these screening procedures, including the temperature criteria, will be updated and modified as new or updated information becomes available.

Comment 2: Definitions for temperature, daily average temperature, mixing zone, default mixing zone, critical conditions, "summertime", ambient flow, and other terms are dispersed throughout the draft procedures document. Occasionally these terms are used within the global sections of the document and at other times in the sections devoted to a particular screening method. LCRA recommends that a global Definitions section be added to the procedures document and that TCEQ provide additional clarification when a term is used within a screening method section.

Comment 3 (page 1 of 8, Draft Thermal Procedures): LCRA respectfully requests the addition of a statement in the draft procedures that describes the exemptions to numeric temperature criteria as outlined in the Surface Water Quality Standards 30 TAC 307.4(f). LCRA also requests that the flow chart include a decision point for cooling water impoundments and industrial cooling water areas illustrating the exemption described in 30 TAC 307.4(f).

Comment 4 (page 2 of 8, Draft Thermal Procedures): "Summertime" is defined in the draft procedures as June through August. LCRA recommends that "summertime" be defined as July 1 through September 30 to be consistent with TCEQ Surface Water Quality Monitoring Procedures (Volume 1). These monitoring procedures define July 1 through September 30 as the "critical period" of the year when "minimum stream flows, maximum temperatures, and minimum dissolved oxygen (DO) concentrations typically occur in Texas streams."

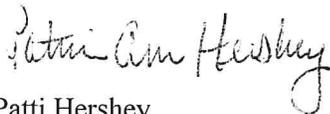
Comment 5 (page 2 of 8, Draft Thermal Procedures): The draft procedures state that, “in cases where effluent temperature does not follow ambient temperature patterns, a winter reasonable potential analysis may be performed to verify compliance with temperature criteria.” LCRA respectfully requests more details and explanation regarding this statement. For instance, the phrase “effluent that does not follow ambient temperature patterns” should be defined. Similarly, “winter reasonable potential analysis” should be defined. TCEQ should also explain how compliance would be verified. If the temperature criteria in the winter is to be based upon the same assumptions as the temperature criteria in the summer that should be stated, or a different approach should be provided.

Comment 6 (page 3 of 8, Draft Thermal Procedures): Ambient summer temperatures are discussed in the draft temperature screening analysis. The draft procedures state that the value 30.5°C (86.9°F) will normally be assumed during screening, and that value is derived from statistical analysis of summer water temperatures throughout the State. However, there is no information regarding details of the statistical analysis. Data from gauge monitoring, thermal plume studies, or other reliable data should be used to determine ambient water temperature whenever available. Therefore, LCRA recommends that an additional option be included allowing ambient temperature to be based on the actual site specifics and conditions. If actual data is not available, then the permit writer may propose to use the value derived from the statistical analysis of summer temperatures throughout the State or data from surrogate water bodies or another alternative temperature that is appropriate for the site. If a default temperature is used, LCRA recommends 32°C.

Comment 7 (page 3 and page 6 of 8, Draft Thermal Procedures): The proposed procedures indicate that screening procedures will progress from simple, conservative approaches to more complex, site-specific approaches as necessary. From the flowchart, it appears that the permit writer will evaluate the proposed temperatures using the most conservative approach first and, if the proposed effluent temperature meets the criteria at the edge of the default mixing zone, then permit limits can be constructed. However, in this case, because the approach is conservative and a default mixing zone is used, permit limits could be more restrictive than if a more complex, site specific approach were used. LCRA requests that TCEQ prevent the situation where an overly conservative permit limit is implemented, but because of anti-backsliding rules, the temperature limit cannot be reassessed in the future with a more site-specific screening analysis.

LCRA respectfully submits the above comments. If you have any questions or need additional information regarding this submittal, please contact me at (512) 578-3385 or [patti.hershey@lcra.org](mailto:patti.hershey@lcra.org).

Sincerely,



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