UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

DEC 17 2003

OFFICE OF
WATER

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Watershed-Based National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permitting Implementation Guidance

FROM: G. Tracy Mehan, III
Assistant Administrator

TO: Water Division Directors, Regions I - X

I am pleased to transmit to you the final Watershed-Based NPDES Permitting Implementation Guidance. This represents one of several tools referenced in my December 3, 2002, memorandum on Advancing the Watershed Approach and the January 7, 2003, Watershed-Based NPDES Permitting Policy Statement. Combined, these documents represent an important aspect of EPA's commitment to watershed management and support for a holistic watershed approach to water quality management.

This implementation guidance expands the concepts described in the policy statement and is designed to promote implementation of the watershed-based permitting approach. It focuses on defining both the general approach and process for watershed-based NPDES permitting. The guidance addresses issues related to program implementation, but does not provide detailed technical information or address procedural and administrative actions related to permit issuance. These will be covered in a subsequent technical guidance document. Over the next two months, the Office of Wastewater Management will work with you and your states to gain the Regional and state input required to develop a strong technical guidance that continues to advance the watershed approach to water quality management. In the interim, I applaud the work being done to advance watershed-based permitting and encourage you to use this implementation guidance and other tools available to work with your states to move watershed-based permitting from the concept stage to implementation stage.

If you would like to further discuss watershed-based permitting please feel free to call Jim Hanlon, Director, Office of Wastewater Management or have your staff contact Robin Kime at (202) 564-5047 or kime.robin@epa.gov. I greatly appreciate your support and leadership in this effort.

Attachment

cc: Michael O. Leavitt, Administrator
Stephen L. Johnson, Acting Deputy Administrator
Regional Administrators
Regional NPDES Program Managers