

# Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Quick Fact Sheet

For more detail: <https://www.state.nj.us/dep/wms/bears/tmdls.html>

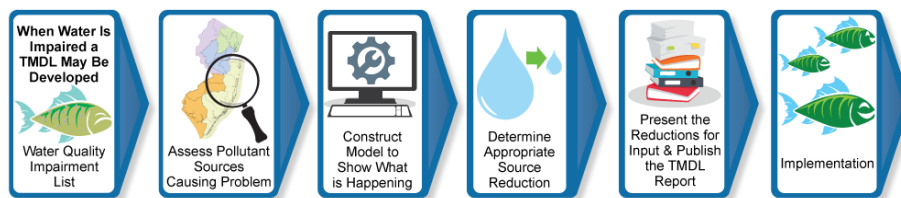
## What is the purpose?

To ensure that all NJ surface waters (i.e., rivers, lakes, streams) can be safely used for recreation, aquatic life, drinking water, trout maintenance and shellfish harvesting designated uses.

## What is a TMDL?

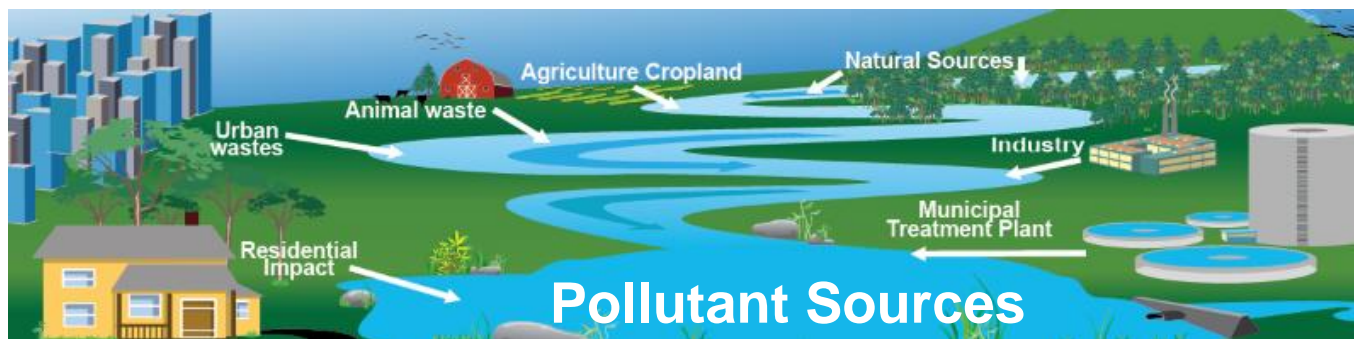
Sometimes a body of water becomes too polluted. NJDEP has developed surface water quality standards (SWQS) for different designated uses. When those standards are exceeded, the water body must go on a “pollutant diet.” A TMDL is the maximum amount (i.e., load) of a pollutant that a water body can receive while still meeting SWQS for designated uses.

## The TMDL Process



## How does a water body become polluted?

Humans generate pollution. Although a substantial amount of pollutants comes from wastewater treatment and industries, there are many other point and nonpoint (NPS) sources as well as natural inputs (see figure and box).



## Is a TMDL always required?

The Clean Water Act (CWA) requires TMDLs for pollutants causing designated use impairments. In some cases, the NJDEP will develop watershed restoration plans that can remediate impairments before a TMDL is formally adopted, thereby eliminating the need for a TMDL.

## How often are waters evaluated?

EPA requires assessment every 2 years (303(d) list). During each assessment cycle, impaired waters are ranked / prioritized for TMDL development.

## What is the TMDL process?

A load reduction target is established for each pollutant causing an impairment. Mathematical models are developed to simulate water quality for a waterbody and all its contributing waters (i.e., the watershed). The model evaluates different scenarios (e.g., no reduction, maximum reduction, etc.) to produce scientifically-defensible reductions throughout the watershed.

## Point source or Nonpoint source?

The USEPA defines a point source as any “discernable, confined and discrete conveyance.” Examples are pipes, ditches, channels, tunnels, wells, etc. Nonpoint sources are defined as anything that is not a point source (e.g., faulty septic systems). For TMDLs, point sources include stormwater drainage networks, since water is conveyed to surface waters natural and man-made conveyances.

### Sum of Load Allocations:

Maximum loads allowed from nonpoint sources (e.g., forest, urban/suburban and agricultural runoff).

$$TMDL = \Sigma LA + \Sigma WLA + MOS + RC$$

### Sum of Waste Load Allocations:

Maximum loads allowed from point sources (e.g., wastewater facilities).

**Margin of Safety:** small percentage of WLAs and LAs to allow for uncertainty.

**Reserve Capacity:** allocation of pollution for future growth in the watershed.

## Is the public involved?

Yes! Following TMDL proposal, there is a 30-day public comment period at in-person / virtual meetings and/or in writing. Stakeholders are consulted in advance for input before the formal comment period.

## What happens after a TMDL is adopted?

Once the EPA approves a TMDL and all responses to public comment, the TMDL is adopted as an amendment to applicable water quality management plans. The TMDL will include an implementation plan that discusses required permit changes, additional measures, and recommended best management practices.