

Background

The MS4 General Permit regulates the discharge of stormwater into lakes, rivers and wetlands in Minnesota.

Under the Federal Clean Water Act, the MPCA is required to issue National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits to regulate many types of water including municipal and industrial wastewater, feedlots and stormwater. Since 1974, the MPCA has been delegated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to administer the NPDES program and all of its related permitting activities. The goal of the MS4 General Permit is to protect water quality in Minnesota's surface waters through the management and treatment of urban stormwater runoff.

Economic Concerns

The MPCA understands and is sensitive to the current economic climate and the resulting impacts on funding at the local, state and national levels. We have received feedback from cities and other permittees stating that the costs to implement a stormwater management program are substantial.

Addressing the issue of cost is a priority. We are interested in working with MS4 permittees to find effective solutions that help minimize costs while meeting state and federal requirements established to ensure protection of our state's valuable lakes, rivers and streams. Specifically, we will review how permit requirements could be simplified and implementation timelines could be adjusted to help alleviate costs.

Permit Development

In drafting the permit, MPCA staff considered stakeholder and work group input, the MS4 Permit Improvement Guide, existing state and federal regulations and regional and national benchmarks. We recognize that there is federal stormwater rule-making underway and expect changes at that level will influence the next permit cycle (2017) in Minnesota. See the MS4 Permit Reissuance timeline on the reverse of this page.

Previous Permit Modifications based on Stakeholder Comments

Recent inquiries have questioned the credence given to stakeholder comments related to draft permits. Below are several examples of adjustments made to permits based on stakeholder input.

- **Minneapolis and St. Paul Individual Stormwater Permits (issued January 2011)** – A number of monitoring requirements were adjusted.
- **Industrial Stormwater Multi-Sector General Permit (issued April 2010)** – Adjustments were made regarding implementation of best management practices and Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) spill prevention requirements and availability.
- **Construction Stormwater General Permit (issued August 2008)** – Changes to requirements for discharges to calcareous fens, training on the installation and maintenance of best management practices and documentation of permanent stormwater management systems were included in the final permit.
- **MS4 General Permit (issued March 2006)** – Non-degradation and source water protection requirements adjusted.

Permit Reissuance Timeline

