

Attachment A: Levels of Volunteer Collected Water Quality Data in Virginia

In Virginia, the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has developed three levels of data quality for volunteer and other non-DEQ water quality monitoring data based upon both the level of data quality and the authorized uses of the data provided to the agency. In addition to agency needs, collected data may also be used to educate the community, to assist local governments in land use planning, to supplement data for university and professional studies, and to assist local soil and water conservation districts in prioritizing watershed work for best management practices.

<u>Level</u>	<u>Appropriate Data Uses</u>	<u>QA/QC Protocols</u>
III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List or delist waters on the 303(d) Impaired waters list Assess waters for 305(b) Report Use with DEQ data for TMDL development All uses listed in Levels I and II 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEQ-approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) and field or lab Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). Field and/or laboratory audit required. Group provides calibration and quality control associated information to DEQ when submitting data. This information must meet the specific criteria stated in the QAPP.
II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify waters for DEQ follow up monitoring Track performance of TMDL implementation All uses listed in Level I 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEQ-approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) and field or lab Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). There may be deviation from an approved method if it can be demonstrated that the method collects data of similar quality to an approved method.
I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Baseline Conditions Notification of Possible Pollution Events Local Land Use Decisions Special Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) or SOP required by DEQ. Uniform methodology recommended. QAPP, SOPs and/or lab methods do not meet DEQ quality assurance/quality control requirements. There is no numeric Virginia Water Quality Standard for the parameter*.

* There is no numeric criteria in the Virginia Water Quality Standard regulations for the following commonly monitored parameters: nitrate (except for waterbodies used for drinking water purposes), nitrite, Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen (TKN), orthophosphate, suspended solids, total nitrogen, total phosphorus (except for lakes), water clarity (turbidity/Secchi depth). Information about Virginia Water Quality Standards is [available here](#). Data on parameters for which there is no standard may be used as Level II if used for agency business that does not require a standard (e.g. tracking TMDL implementation performance).

Monitors are encouraged to adopt Level II or III methods (e.g., samples sent to an accredited laboratory for analysis or otherwise follow DEQ recognized methods) in the event Virginia adopts such standards so the data could be used in the future.