

Technical Track Work Group Methodology Discussion

11-07-2012

Context of the Discussion

There are two separate but related issues:

- 1) At the Spokane River Toxics Workshop it was recommended that a standard methodology be developed for use in assessing PCB in the Spokane River Watershed.

The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) has previously developed a methodology that can be adopted by the Task Force.

This methodology includes the use of **Method 1668** and also a set of **Decision Rules** that are used to evaluate the quality of the data and used in a QAPP.

Ecology Urban Waters is using it as a template with some method and decision rule modification for future work. The EAP Long-Term Monitoring Study pilot is attempting to use similar methodology as Urban Waters.

- 2) The Idaho permits will require monitoring of PCB. There is a question about the analytical method. EPA is proposing **Method 1668**. There are three versions of this method. The primary difference being the latitude of the acceptance criteria.

Approach

Item 2 is urgent for the Idaho permittees due to the issuance of the EPA permits. It is not related to the Task Force work other than the fact that data from the permittees is potentially one measure of progress.

Permits in Washington are completed as are the QAPPs and monitoring has started at some facilities. There are minor differences in QAPPs due to the fact that they were developed over time.

Method 1668 is specified but not A, B, or C. Permittees select the laboratory and are responsible for collecting data in compliance with the QAPP. They use different methods.

Suggested Discussion on this point: A roundtable discussion with permittees regarding what they are using.

Outcomes:

- 1) Some questions may arise relating to method blank decision rules and also acceptance criteria.
- 2) The Idaho permittees and EPA will have a better understanding of the requirements for the Washington permittees.

Item 1 is urgent for Ecology since there are new and ongoing studies that are being undertaken regarding PCB in the Spokane River Watershed. There have been different approaches used within Ecology.

Ecology needs to move ahead with developing QAPPs and conducting studies and would like to be consistent within the agency for work in relation to the Spokane River.

In the long run, it would be beneficial to have consistency in approach for Ecology and the SRRTTF as it moves forward with the **Work Plan**. This is so watershed data is comparable over time.

Suggested Discussion on this Point: What are the pros and cons of having a consistent methodology, set of decision rules, and acceptance criteria? This would essentially be a voluntary mutually agreed upon **Standard Operating Procedure** for environmental sampling and analysis. It would be incorporated into the Work Plan for use in data gap analysis and long term trend monitoring.

Outcomes:

- 1) Ecology will need to move forward with existing work in order to take advantage of available funding. There is some flexibility in how QAPPs are worded to make changes if necessary.
- 2) A voluntary SOP is expected to be of general benefit. Other members of the SRRTTF would need an opportunity to provide input into this, which could take time. It is possible this is a task for the Technical Consultant.
- 3) Another option would be for the SRRTTF to rely on the expertise of Ecology/EPA to establish the standard. These agencies have internal expertise and have also consulted with the DRBC and other experts. A set of recommendations will be drafted prior to the TTWG. If SRRTTF members have expert consultants on staff they could also be consulted and recommendations included. This would be the quickest solution and easiest to implement if there is consensus.