

ASK AN ATTORNEY

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If I own or intend to develop property in PA, is the PA State Water Plan something that is important to me?



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serving water resources in PA, recognizing the complexity and multifaceted character of water-related issues. These issues affect, either directly or indirectly, everyone who lives or works in PA, and many who live or work in surrounding states. The ability to take a shower, to go to work, to turn on a light, or to enjoy the tranquility of PA's natural treasures all turn, to one degree or another, on the types of issue that are at the heart of the state water planning process.

The genesis of the state water planning process is legislation that was adopted in late 2002 known as the Water Resources Planning Act or Act 220.

If I own or intend to develop property in PA, is the PA State Water Plan something that is important to me?

Under this legislation, the water planning process is designed to address issues of state-wide importance while having the flexibility to focus on regional differences throughout Pennsylvania. Six regional water resources committees covering the DE, Potomac, OH, Great Lakes, Upper Susquehanna and Lower Susquehanna watersheds, respectively, have been working over the past several years to identify water-related issues of critical importance within each of these regions. This work is being performed in tandem with the State Water Resources Committee, which has been developing policies, and programs that apply to Pennsylvania as a whole. The State Water Plan will include both regional components and integrated state-

wide components.

Although PA is generally rich in water resources, those water resources are subject to multiple and at times conflicting uses. PA has traditionally dealt with water resources in a splintered and disjointed fashion. While individual aspects of water management may be subject to detailed and complex regulatory programs, those programs have generally existed in their own unique silos. By contrast, the PA State Water Plan is intended to assess water resource issues on an integrated basis. For example, links between water quantity and water quality, surface water supplies and groundwater supplies, land use planning and storm-water management, wetlands preservation and flood events are being evaluated.

During the coming months, many elements of the State Water Plan will be prepared and will be available for review and public comment. Participation in this process is vital to ensure that the State Water Plan reflects the diversity of interests and views of those with a stake in the process.

Michael Meloy is a partner with Manko, Gold, Katcher & Fox, LLP, a law firm concentrating in environmental, energy and land use law, where he represents clients in connection with a broad spectrum of environmental litigation, regulatory and transactional issues. He has used his combination of legal and technical skills in handling remediation and redevelopment projects throughout PA and across the world. ■