

**SUSQUEHANNA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION**  
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**NEWS RELEASE**  
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**SRBC TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETINGS ON THE ASSESSMENT OF  
SOURCE WATER TRANSFERRED FROM LANCASTER COUNTY TO  
CHESTER-COUNTY COMMUNITIES**

HARRISBURG (May 21) – The Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) will hold two identical public meetings on Wednesday, May 28 to present and discuss the Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) report for a public drinking water intake in Lancaster County that services two Chester-County communities—Parkesburg and Coatesville.

- 6:00 p.m. at the Parkesburg Borough Hall, 329 West First Ave., Parkesburg, Chester County
- 7:30 p.m. at the Bart Township Building, Bart, Lancaster County (light refreshments will be provided at this meeting)

The Lancaster County intake is located on the West Branch Octoraro Creek, which is in the Susquehanna River Basin. The Pennsylvania-American Water Company that operates the intake for the Coatesville System transfers the water to the Delaware River Basin to service the Parkesburg and Coatesville communities. Given the out-of-basin transfer, SRBC is conducting the two identical meetings to give residents of the Susquehanna basin, where the water originates, and the Delaware basin an opportunity to comment on the report.

SRBC Executive Director Paul Swartz noted that the 1996 federal Safe Drinking Water Act requires all states to assess sources of drinking water for their susceptibility to pollution if that water is used by public water systems. The assessments are focused on the quality of the raw (river) water prior to treatment for tap water.

“The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, which has been working to meet this assessment mandate, contracted SRBC to produce the source water assessment report for the intake on the West Branch Octoraro Creek,” said Swartz. “Now that the report has been drafted, we hope the residents of both counties will attend the public meetings and offer their valuable feedback.”

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The West Branch Octoraro Creek Watershed drains an area about 22 square miles in western Lancaster County. Agriculture is the predominant land use (about 80 percent) in the watershed. More than one million gallons of water per day is withdrawn from the West Branch Octoraro Creek for drinking water purposes.

According to Swartz, the agricultural operations are vital to the livelihood of the local residents in this rural watershed. Excess nutrients from the agricultural operations, however, are the greatest source of contamination in the West Branch Octoraro Creek, with pollutants from wastewater treatment plants and road deicing among the other sources.

“We’ve identified activities such as manure spreading and storage, runoff from animal pastures and feedlots, and discharges from wastewater treatment plants as the primary sources of contamination in this watershed,” said Swartz. “Runoff from roads with deicing products is also a concern with respect to raw water quality.”

Swartz said, “While there is an active stakeholders’ group within the watershed working to address the growing water quality concerns in the West Branch Octoraro Creek Watershed, it’s extremely important that more local residents and farmers be aware of the problems facing the watershed. The purpose of the May 28 public meetings is to discuss the identified water quality problems and facilitate ongoing dialogue to find long-term solutions at the local level.”

SRBC is encouraging residents and the local agricultural community to attend the public meetings, particularly the one being held at the Bart Township Building at 7:30 p.m.

Swartz said, “By working together at the local level and having a more informed community, we believe that short- and long-term solutions will be identified and implemented in the watershed.”

The Susquehanna River Basin Commission is the governing agency established under a compact signed on Dec. 24, 1970 by the federal government and the states of New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland to protect and wisely manage the water resources of the Susquehanna River Basin. The Susquehanna River starts in Cooperstown, N.Y., and flows 444 miles to Havre de Grace, Md., where the river meets the Chesapeake Bay.