



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 2
290 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

December 23, 2019

Mr. Walter Hang
Toxics Targeting
215 North Cayuga Street
Ithaca, New York 14850

Dear Mr. Hang:

I am writing in response to your October 25, 2019 and November 6, 2019 letters to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 2 regarding Cayuga Lake. The EPA shares your concerns regarding the complex water quality issues impacting the southern end of the lake as a result of point and nonpoint sources of pollution.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) is the lead agency for addressing impairments in lake through the development of a TMDL and for the renewal of the Cornell University Lake Source Cooling facility permit. The EPA is working with the NYSDEC to provide technical, regulatory and policy-based support towards the establishment of a TMDL for Cayuga Lake. As you know, the NYSDEC is close to completing a TMDL for phosphorus based on an extensive data collection program and a water quality model for the lake. The model will enable the NYSDEC to evaluate the relative impact of the various sources of pollutants to the lake and calculate reductions to meet the applicable water quality standard. The phosphorus TMDL will be based on a management scenario that targets the sources causing impairments in the lake. Through the implementation of the phosphorus TMDL, it is expected that reductions in nonpoint sources of phosphorus will also reduce silt and sediment loadings to the lake. Permit conditions for the Lake Source Cooling facility will be based on the waste load allocations included in the TMDL.

The TMDL process requires that the NYSDEC provide public participation on the TMDL. We encourage the public to actively engage in the public process that NYSDEC will provide during the TMDL public comment period. Once this process is completed, the state will submit the TMDL and response to comments to the EPA for review. Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act and EPA's implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Part 130 describe the statutory and regulatory requirements for approvable TMDLs. The EPA will review the Cayuga TMDL and make a decision based on these regulatory requirements. If you have any further questions, please contact Peter Brandt of the Water Division at 212-637-3654 or brandt.peter@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter D. Lopez", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Peter D. Lopez
Regional Administrator

cc: Basil Seggos, Commissioner, NYS DEC