



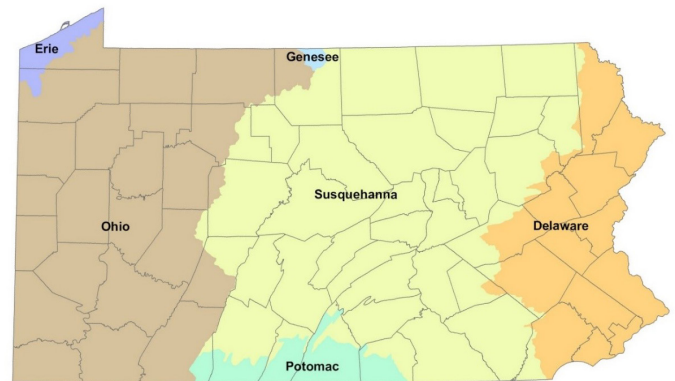
Pennsylvania Ground Water Withdrawal Guidelines

Pennsylvania's groundwater law is based on the so-called "American Rule." Under this rule, landowners may withdraw percolating groundwater from beneath their property for any "natural and ordinary" use without regard for neighboring users. Natural and ordinary uses encompass virtually any water use, if the use occurs on the landowner's property. Uses occurring off site are "unreasonable" and "unlawful." This rule was established at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution to promote economic growth and development, the predominant social goal at that time. This rule applies to all six of Pennsylvania's watersheds with additional thresholds within the Delaware and Susquehanna watersheds.

Property owners are responsible to apply for reviews, pay fees, get permits, etc. as applicable to the well location and anticipated or desired yield or usage.

Watershed Designations Within Pennsylvania

In the 1960s and 1970s, the federal government created two interstate river basin commissions to manage water interests in the more densely populated Susquehanna and Delaware River watersheds. The Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) and the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) each have their own water withdraw thresholds that they govern.



SUSQUEHANA WATERSHED

Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) Project Review Threshold:

- A withdraw from groundwater (single or combination of sources) for any purpose is reviewable and regulated when the daily average gross withdraw during any 30-consecutive-day period is greater than 100,000 gallons.
- Agricultural projects are exempt from project review fees.
- Agricultural projects are not subject to the consumptive use (CU) regulations because mitigation projects have been undertaken to offset CU from agricultural projects.

Two Step Application process:

1. Submittal of an aquifer testing plan for Commission review and approval.
2. Submittal of the groundwater withdraw application supported with the results of a Commission-approved aquifer test.

Informative SRBC's website links:

- SRBD Regulating Fact Sheet: <https://www.srbc.net/our-work/fact-sheets/docs/regulating-water-uses-in-srb.pdf>
- Aquifer Testing Guidance: <https://www.srbc.net/regulatory/policies-guidance/docs/aquifer-testing-guidance-policy-2007-01.pdf>
- Application Process: <https://www.srbc.net/regulatory/application-process/> (access to forms and templates)

DELAWARE WATERSHED

Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) Project Review Threshold:

<https://www.state.nj.us/drbc/programs/project/docket-app-info.html>

- A withdraw from groundwater for any purpose is reviewable when the daily average gross withdraw during any 30 consecutive day period is greater than 100,000 gallons.
- The withdraw application can be found here:
<https://www.state.nj.us/drbc/library/documents/projectreview/app-withdrawal0817.pdf>
- Within the DRBC, there is a sub area called the **Southeastern Pennsylvania Groundwater Protected Area (SEPA-GWPA)**, where more stringent regulations apply to ground water withdrawals than they do in the rest of the Delaware River Basin.

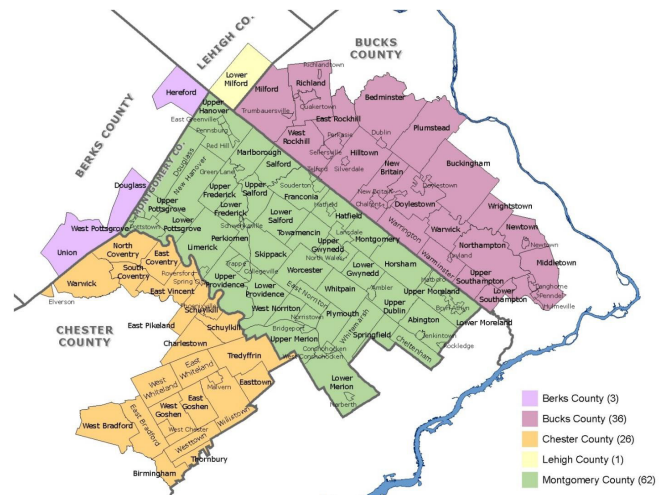
Southeastern Pennsylvania Ground Water Protected Area (SEPA-GWPA):

- A protected area permit is required if the proposed new or increased rate of withdrawal from a well or group of wells operated as a system average more than 10,000 gallons per day over a 30-day period.
- Area includes all of Montgomery County and certain townships in Berks, Bucks, Chester, and Lehigh County. <https://www.state.nj.us/drbc/programs/project/gwpa.html>

Southeast Pennsylvania Groundwater Protected Area Map

Requirements-

- Permits required for withdraws in excess of 10,000 gpd for any 30-day period
- Advance notice of exploratory drilling – 30 days
- Hydrogeological report - 48-hour pumping test and monitoring of wells and surface water bodies
- Well registration, metering, and reporting
- Conservation requirements
- Compliance with subbasin withdraw limits



References:

Abdalla, C., Drohan, J., Becker, J., Saacke Blunk, K. 2008. Access and Allocation of Water in Pennsylvania. College of Agricultural Sciences, Agricultural Research and Cooperative Extension. The Pennsylvania State University.

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P.O. Box 7360, West Trenton, NJ 08628-0360

Phone (609) 883-9500; Fax (609) 883-952

<https://www.state.nj.us/drbc/>

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4423 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110

Phone (717) 238-0423

<https://www.srbcc.net/>