



NEWS RELEASE

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Cuyahoga River Water Quality Continues to Improve; **U.S. EPA Agrees to Remove “Aesthetics” Impairment Designation**

Responding to Ohio EPA’s recommendation from earlier this year, the U.S. EPA has agreed to remove the “Degradation of Aesthetics” Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI) from the Cuyahoga River Area of Concern (AOC).

BUIs identify specific problems that can prevent a waterbody from meeting its full water quality potential. In 1992, the AOC advisory committee identified nine BUIs that were of concern, degrading the Cuyahoga River and needing to be addressed. Aesthetics of the river have improved significantly over the last 25 years, prompting Ohio EPA to request that this impairment designation be removed from the list.

“Ohioans can take a look for themselves and compare improvements in the Cuyahoga River to photos from only a generation ago,” Ohio EPA Director Craig W. Butler said. “In fact, the removal of the aesthetics impairment is about more than just appearances; it reflects a strong state and community effort to restore the river. The Cuyahoga is becoming a national symbol of recovery – showing what can be accomplished through public and private efforts, regulation and focused research.”

This significant milestone was achieved through the collaborative efforts of dedicated local, state and federal partners. In June, Ohio EPA held a public meeting in Parma to accept comments as part of the removal recommendation process. Members of the public were invited to attend to learn about the BUI change proposals and provide comments. There are additional steps to take before reaching the goal of removing the eight remaining BUIs. As each BUI removal goal is met, Ohio EPA will notify the community, seek public input and submit additional BUI removal recommendations to U.S. EPA.

More information about the improvements and remaining impairments in the Cuyahoga River Area of Concern are available online: www.cuyahogaoc.org.

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www.epa.ohio.gov

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency was created in 1972 to consolidate efforts to protect and improve air quality, water quality and waste management in Ohio. Since then, air pollutants dropped by as much as 90 percent; large rivers meeting standards improved from 21 percent to 89 percent; and hundreds of polluting, open dumps were replaced with engineered landfills and an increased emphasis on waste reduction and recycling.