

PWEA Position Statement

Microconstituents in the Environment



Adopted by PWEA on August 14, 2014

Updated by PWEA on April 18, 2019

PWEA Mission Statement

Enhance the knowledge and abilities of Pennsylvania's water quality professionals, promote sound sustainable water policies, and promote public awareness of the need to protect water resources.

A topic relevant to this PWEA mission is the issue of microconstituents in the environment. The PWEA adopts the same definition for microconstituents as the Water Environment Federation (WEF) in their position statement on this topic – *“natural and manmade substances, including elements and inorganic and organic chemicals, detected within water and the environment for which continued assessment of the potential impact on human health and the environment is a prudent course of action. Frequently mentioned microconstituents include pharmaceutical and personal care products, pesticides, and industrial chemicals.”*

Microconstituents have been detected in surface water and groundwater throughout Pennsylvania. Based on the most prevalent and current treatment technologies, some, but not all, microconstituents can be removed by treatment facilities. Hence, the PWEA is committed to advancing the understanding of microconstituents in the water environment and supporting efforts to safeguard the public and the environment. Consistent with this position, the PWEA supports WEF's positions on monitoring, assessment, and prevention of microconstituents from entering Pennsylvania waterways via wastewater treatment facilities. In addition, the PWEA will look for opportunities to play an active role in informing and educating its members and the public on this topic through PWEA-promoted conference sessions, specialty conferences, and articles broadly disseminated to its members.