

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-XX

A RESOLUTION of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission further encouraging the use of dry cooling and hybrid dry cooling technologies for power generation, data centers and other facilities to promote the conservation of the waters of the Susquehanna River Basin (the “basin”).

WHEREAS, the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (the “Commission”) has always encouraged water conservation, particularly when that use is consumptive with respect to the waters of the basin; and

WHEREAS, the reported basinwide consumptive water use for power generation is approximately 90 million gallons per day which represents a substantial percentage of all reported consumptive use in the basin; and

WHEREAS, data centers for a range of uses are quickly emerging as large consumptive users of water where it is projected that this industry will be in the top ten users of water nationwide; and

WHEREAS, it has been the practice of the Commission to encourage pre-application meetings between project sponsors and Commission staff to determine utilization of the most appropriate cooling technology given the water availability within a particular hydrologic setting; and

WHEREAS, the Commission recognizes that an increasing number of power generation facilities, such as combined cycle natural gas plants, and data centers are utilizing dry cooling and hybrid dry cooling technologies to reduce the environmental footprint in the basin, and are demonstrating overall efficiencies in operations that are equivalent to wet cooling processes; and

WHEREAS, it has been the practice of Commission staff to encourage project sponsors to consider alternate and innovative technologies to reduce water demands; and

WHEREAS, the Commission recognizes that securing consumptive use makeup water has become an increasing challenge due to increasing and competing demands in the basin, which can be exacerbated with proposed facility locations in higher quality and headwater settings; and

WHEREAS, consumptive water use requests for power generation and data centers could occur in portions of the basin where water resources may be limited or have competing demands, and uninterruptible sources of supply are not available; and

WHEREAS, the Commission anticipates that the utilization of dry cooling and hybrid dry cooling technologies not only will reduce the water demand at facilities employing it but also provide increased flexibility in where these facilities can be located; and

WHEREAS, use of dry cooling and hybrid dry cooling technologies reduces impacts to aquatic ecosystems through the reduction of thermal impacts associated with large volume industrial discharges; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Commission to promote and encourage the use of dry cooling and hybrid dry cooling technologies in order to reduce the impact of consumptive water uses in the basin, reduce dependence on large volume sources, avoid water use conflicts, and avoid potential for alteration of natural stream regimens, water quality and other uses of the watercourse.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. With due regard for all approval standards, applicable laws, and other safeguards, the Commission will prioritize the review of projects utilizing dry cooling and hybrid dry cooling technologies for reducing consumptive water use.

2. As appropriate, the Commission will require project sponsors proposing consumptive water use for the purposes of cooling to consider the use of dry cooling and hybrid dry cooling technologies.

3. As appropriate, the Commission will require project sponsors not utilizing dry cooling technologies to submit for Commission review a rigorous alternatives analysis as justification consistent with 18 C.F.R. §§ 806.21(b), 806.22(c), 806.25(b) and Objective A-2 of the Commission's Comprehensive Plan.

4. As appropriate, the Commission will consider relaxing applicable passby flow conditions to projects providing upstream flow augmentation in order to provide for uninterrupted operations.

5. As appropriate, the Commission will consider application of allowable discretion under applicable Commission regulation and policy in reviewing and approving alternate consumptive use mitigation and passby flow thresholds consistent with 18 C.F.R. § 806.22.

6. Resolution 2015-02 is hereby rescinded and this resolution shall be effective immediately.

Dated: March 13, 2025

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Suzanne Dorsey, Chair  
Maryland