

Public Notice
Mississippi Environmental Quality Permit Board
P.O. Box 2309
Jackson, Mississippi 39225-2309
Telephone Number (601) 961-5171

Notice is hereby given that the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) proposes to issue a General Permit for the reissuance of groundwater withdrawal permits associated with wells pumping from the Mississippi River Valley Alluvial Aquifer located in the Mississippi Delta region north of Vicksburg. The beneficial use of groundwater in this case shall be limited to agriculture and enhancement of wildlife habitat.

I. Special Terms and Conditions of General Permit:

The intent of the Mississippi Environmental Quality Permit Board (Permit Board) is to issue a General Permit for the beneficial uses of agriculture and enhancement of wildlife habitat in the Delta that will cover only the reissuance of previously issued permits and will remain in effect for 5 years. This General Permit will allow holders of existing groundwater withdrawal permits who apply for coverage under this permit to operate under the basic premise of their existing groundwater withdrawal permits but with the following applicable special terms and conditions:

1. Coverage under this General Permit shall be valid for five (5) years from the issuance date of coverage specified on the Certificate of Coverage. The Permit Board reserves the right to rescind or cancel this General Permit if such action is necessary to effectively and efficiently manage, protect, and utilize the water resources of Mississippi.
2. The volume of water that may be withdrawn and applied per acre during any calendar year covered under this General Permit shall be dependent upon the beneficial use of the water, as follows:
 - a. Up to 1.5 acre-feet per acre per year may be applied to row crops;
 - b. Up to 3.0 acre-feet per acre per year may be applied to rice;
 - c. Up to 5.0 acre-feet per acre per year may be withdrawn for all types of aquaculture except fingerlings;
 - d. Up to 7.0 acre-feet per acre per year may be withdrawn for raising fingerlings;
 - e. Up to 1.0 acre-feet per acre per year may be withdrawn for enhancement of wildlife habitat.
 - f. The permitted volume each year is cumulative depending on all applicable beneficial uses.
 - g. The permitted volume of water applied to an assigned acreage for a particular beneficial use or crop type cannot be exceeded whether or not multiple water sources are used. Conjunctive use of available water resources (involving both groundwater and surface water) is encouraged.

3. As per MDEQ regulation 11 Miss. Admin. Code Part 7, Chapter 1, Rule 1.7 (A), all permittees and licensees shall inform MDEQ of any address changes within fifteen (15) days of any change of address, and must readily accept mail sent to them from the Commission, MDEQ, or the Permit Board.
4. By no later than one (1) year from the issuance date of coverage under this General Permit, the permittee shall implement the required minimum level of water efficiency practices and submit documentation to MDEQ, Office of Land and Water Resources (OLWR), on a form and in a manner prescribed by the OLWR that the required practices have been implemented. Failure to comply with the intent of these provisions will result in enforcement actions and/or revocation of the groundwater withdrawal Certificate of Coverage.
5. At reasonable times, including during the growing season and during irrigation events, if necessary, the permittee shall allow the Permit Board staff or an authorized representative upon presentation of credentials to enter upon the premises where a permitted well and the required associated water efficiency practices are located and inspect the well, equipment, practices, and operations required under the conditions of this general permit; or, if requested, the permittee shall cooperate with the Permit Board staff in conducting a virtual inspection using commonly available technology. Any such inspection will be for the specific permitted acreage associated with the permitted well, not for a farm or farmer. MDEQ may use satellite imagery to remotely check compliance with certain required water efficiency practices when applicable. Any apparent findings of noncompliance based on imagery would have to be confirmed by other means.

II. Manner By Which Public May Comment:

The draft General Permit has been evaluated and the MDEQ staff believes that the General Permit meets the requirements of applicable State water laws and MDEQ regulations (11 Miss. Admin. Code Part 7, Chapter 1). Groundwater withdrawals granted coverage under the General Permit and adhering to conditions contained therein shall operate within State statutory and regulatory constraints (including applicable Special Terms and Conditions) concerning the operation of large-capacity water wells. Therefore, the MDEQ staff has preliminarily decided to recommend to the Permit Board that this General Permit, containing appropriate regulatory constraints, be issued. However, before proceeding further with the MDEQ staff evaluation, public comments are being solicited. The MDEQ staff recommendation to the Permit Board, as well as the Permit Board's decision, will be made only after a thorough consideration of all public comments.

Persons wishing to comment upon the proposed General Permit are invited to submit comments in writing to Chris Hawkins at the address shown above or to his e-mail address at chawkins@mdeq.ms.gov no later than 5:00 p.m. on January 4, 2026. All comments received by this date will be considered in the formulation of final determinations regarding issuance of the General Permit.

III. Additional Information:

For additional details regarding the General Permit, please contact Mr. Hawkins by telephone at (601) 961-5775 or by e-mail at chawkins@mdeq.ms.gov.

Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
Office of Land and Water Resources
700 North State Street
Jackson, Mississippi 39202

Please bring the foregoing to the attention of persons whom you know will be interested.