

# OHIO RIVER VALLEY WATER SANITATION COMMISSION

## Strategic Plan for the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission

June 2008

### **Mission**

The mission of the Commission is to implement the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Compact through direct action and by coordinating the actions of the member states.

**Article I** of the Compact pledges the states to faithful cooperation in the control of pollution and establishes water quality objectives for interstate waters of the District:

- Available for safe and satisfactory use as public and industrial water supplies after reasonable treatment;
- Suitable for recreational usage;
- Capable of maintaining fish and other aquatic life;
- Free from unsightly or malodorous nuisances due to floating solids or sludge deposits;
- Adaptable to such other uses as may be legitimate.

### **Vision**

All interstate waters of the Ohio River Watershed meet the Compact objectives.

### **Strategic Objectives**

- The Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Compact represents an agreement and commitment among the signatory states. It is the function of the Commission to support and coordinate efforts by the states to fulfill their obligations under the Compact.
- The Commission will develop physical, chemical and biological water quality criteria to protect the desired uses.
- The Commission will work with the member states to develop and carry out monitoring and assessment programs to determine the degree to which the desired uses are met.
- The Commission will operate monitoring systems to detect threats to the desired uses of the interstate waters of the District, and will work with the member states to quickly address such threats.
- The Commission will focus its activities first on the Ohio River and the lower reaches of tributaries to the main stem. As resources permit, the Commission may undertake activities on interstate tributaries. Activities on intrastate tributaries shall be undertaken only at the request of a member state, and with the consent of the other states.
- The Commission will, through collaborative research and other means, seek out new technologies and approaches for use in carrying out its mission, and will periodically report on their utilization to the member states.

**Article II** of the Compact creates the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation District as the portion of the signatory states that lies within the Ohio River watershed.

## **Vision**

ORSANCO is actively engaged throughout the Ohio River watershed, in cooperation with the member states and other stakeholders, in carrying out the objectives of the Compact.

## **Strategic Objectives**

- The Commission will work with the member states, federal agencies, local governments, industry and citizens' groups to communicate and promote watershed-based approaches to water quality management.
- The Commission will work to promote awareness of water quality issues and of progress made in improving water quality conditions in the Ohio River Valley through environmental education initiatives.

**Article III** of the Compact creates the Commission as a body corporate with powers and duties as set forth in the Compact, and such additional powers as may be conferred on it by actions of the legislatures of the signatory states or by the United States Congress.

## **Vision**

The Commission is able, through its own authorities and those of its member states, to address all water pollution problems in the District.

## **Strategic Objective**

- The Commission will develop strategies for addressing the interstate pollution problems of the District utilizing the powers established in the Compact.

**Article IV** of the Compact establishes the membership of the Commission.

## **Vision**

Commissioners are empowered to represent their states or, in the case of federal Commissioners, the United States government.

## **Strategic Objective**

- The Commission will communicate effectively with the Compact parties- Governors and State Legislatures, the President and the Congress.

**Article V** of the Compact provides for the business operations of the Commission as follows:

1. The Commission is authorized to elect officers, employ staff, adopt a seal, bylaws, and rules for its management, establish offices and hold meetings.
2. The Commission is required to submit its budget to the Governors for presentation to the Legislatures.
3. The Commission is directed to keep accurate books of account that shall be available for review by state representatives.
4. The Commission is directed to prepare an annual report and submit it to the Governors.
5. The Commission is prohibited from incurring obligations prior to the making of appropriations and from pledging the credit of any of the states.

## **Vision**

The Commission operates effectively as a worldwide leader in regional watershed approaches to environmental restoration and protection.

## **Strategic Objectives**

- The Commission will meet at regular intervals to conduct its business.
- The Commission will operate at budget levels consistent with needs.
- The Commission will prepare an annual report and distribute it to the Governors and legislatures of the member states, the President of the United States and Congressional delegations from the member states, local elected officials within the Compact District, and the public.

**Article VI** of the Compact establishes the Commission's authority to adopt rules, regulations and standards for the treatment of wastes discharged to the interstate waters of the District under the principal that wastes discharged in one state shall not harm the waters of another state.

## **Vision**

All wastewater discharges to interstate waters of the District are provided adequate treatment.

## **Strategic Objectives**

- The Commission will establish and maintain, through periodic review, comprehensive standards for wastewater discharges to the Ohio River.
- The Commission will assess the need for additional standards for discharges to interstate tributaries.

**Article VII** of the Compact recognizes the states' authorities to adopt more stringent requirements than those of ORSANCO.

## **Vision**

Requirements for discharges in each state are protective of downstream and adjacent states' water quality standards.

## **Strategic Objective**

- The Commission will maintain an inventory of applicable state requirements, and will strive to ensure that downstream and adjacent states' requirements are taken into account in states' pollution abatement actions.

**Article VIII** of the Compact directs the Commission to study the pollution problems of the District and make recommendations for their abatement and prevention.

### **Vision**

The Commission attains an understanding of all water pollution problems in the District and, in cooperation with the member states, works towards their solution.

### **Strategic Objectives**

- The Commission will assess the results of its monitoring programs to gain an understanding of water quality conditions in the Ohio River and its tributaries, and to identify actions needed to achieve and maintain water quality objectives.
- The Commission will provide information to State, federal and local government agencies, elected officials, water purveyors, interested parties, and the public at large on water quality conditions in the Ohio River and the lower reaches of its tributaries.
- The Commission will consider the effects of climate change, through consultation with others and, as appropriate, through its own studies, to determine potential impacts on water quality conditions in the Ohio River Basin.
- The Commission will study the impacts of nonpoint source pollution in the Compact District and will consult with the member states to identify successful approaches to reduce those impacts.
- Recognizing the critical relationship between water quantity and water quality, the Commission will maintain communication with the Ohio River Basin Commission, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and other agencies with water resource missions, and work with them to address issues of common interest.
- The Commission will, through its strategic planning process, identify emerging issues that could affect water quality conditions within the Compact district. The Commission will evaluate and define its role, in concert with its member states and federal agency partners, in addressing such issues.
- The Commission will strive to ensure that follow-up is provided to all identified water quality problems by the appropriate party.

**Article IX** of the Compact authorizes the Commission to issue orders on any entity discharging sewage or industrial wastes into the interstate waters of the District in violation of the Compact, provided that at least two Commissioners from the state in which the discharge originates consent. Article IX further establishes the duty of the entity to comply with the order, and establishes the jurisdiction of the federal courts in such instances.

### **Vision**

All wastewater dischargers operate treatment facilities in compliance with permit limits.

### **Strategic Objectives**

- The Commission will support and coordinate states' pollution abatement efforts.

- The Commission will, when necessary, initiate its own enforcement actions to achieve compliance by wastewater dischargers.

**Article X** of the Compact establishes the states' shares of Commission funding.

**Vision**

The Commission receives adequate funding from appropriate sources in order to address the water pollution problems of the District.

**Strategic Objective**

- The Commission will seek funds from sources other than the states' regular appropriations and the basic federal program grant under the following conditions:
  - a. The funds will support activities that advance the Commission's strategic objectives.
  - b. Receipt of such funds by the Commission will not adversely affect funding of the member states' programs.
  - c. Pursuit of such funds does not require excessive staff time such that current program objectives might not be met.

**Article XI** of the Compact provides for the Compact to become effective upon approval by Congress and ratification by the state legislatures.

**Vision**

Additional states join the Compact in order to extend its coverage to the entire Ohio River watershed.

**Strategic Objective**

- The Commission will maintain communications with Ohio River Basin states that are not members, and will invite their participation in activities that address the entire watershed.

**Statement of Public Accountability**

The Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission has been established by an instrument of the laws of the member states and by the United States of America. The Commission is supported by public funds provided by the member states and the federal government. As such, the Commission recognizes its obligation to the public it serves: to make its information and findings available to the public, to educate the public regarding water quality in the Ohio River and its tributaries, and to consult with the public in its decision making about the restoration and protection of the waters of the district.