



## VARIANCES FOR POLLUTION CONTROL STANDARDS

Fact Sheet

### What is a Pollution Control Standard?

*Pollution Control Standards define specific uses for the Ohio River and establish criteria that must be met to ensure that the river is capable of supporting these uses.*

### What are the protected uses of the Ohio River?

- Aquatic Life
- Fish Consumption
- Public and Industrial Water Supply
- Recreation

### What input does the public have in the variance process?

When a variance request is received, ORSANCO is required to notify the public and hold a 30-day comment period. A final decision of whether or not to grant a variance is made at a regularly scheduled Commission meeting held in February, June, and October.

Comments can be submitted directly to ORSANCO at [www.orsanco.org](http://www.orsanco.org), by mail at 5735 Kellogg Ave. Cincinnati, OH, 45230, or at a scheduled public meeting or webcast. For more information, contact ORSANCO at 513-231-7719.



### What is a variance?

A variance is the temporary modification of ORSANCO's Pollution Control Standards that applies only to a specific permitted discharger that has requested and received a variance. As specified in the Pollution Control Standards, the Commission may grant variances only to the wastewater discharge requirements and to the "prohibition on mixing zones for bioaccumulative chemicals of concern." A "mixing zone" is an area where the wastewater discharged from a permitted facility enters and mixes with the surrounding water body. Variances granted by ORSANCO require that designated uses be met outside any mixing zone. The Commission can only grant variances to its own Pollution Control Standards.

### Why does ORSANCO consider granting variances?

ORSANCO will only consider granting a variance when there are no reasonable alternatives available to a discharger to meet the requirements of the Commission's Pollution Control Standards. ORSANCO's Pollution Control Standards afford the flexibility to adopt a variance that temporarily modifies the current wastewater discharge requirements while still requiring that the water quality criteria be met outside the mixing zone. Variances are allowed for a maximum five year period.

### Does a variance increase the amount of pollution in the Ohio River?

A variance does not allow an increase in the amount of pollution that a discharger releases into the river; rather, it modifies the wastewater discharge requirements to reflect the highest attainable level that a discharger **has been** achieving based on their current treatment technology.

### To be granted a variance, a discharger must:

- Define their current treatment technology and the best available treatment they can achieve with that technology.
- Prove that the burden of meeting the wastewater discharge requirements will have social/economic impacts.
- Develop a pollution reduction plan that defines what they will do to eventually meet all requirements of the Pollution Control Standards.

