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Any questions or comments regarding the contents of this report should be directed to:

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Foreword

Water quality reporting under Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 305(b) and Section 303(d) are highly visible ways of communicating to the public about the health of the nation's waters. The quality and reliability of the information they contain becomes increasingly important as it is used to set priorities and to implement water quality controls and protection activities. For preparation of 2008 Section 305(b) Reports, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has provided states, territories, and authorized tribes with guidance for integrating the development and submission of 305(b) Reports and Section 303(d) Lists of Impaired Waters. EPA guidance recommends that states, territories and authorized tribes submit a 2008 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report that will satisfy the CWA requirements for both Section 305(b) water quality reports and Section 303(d) lists.

New York State strives to produce a water quality report that not only fulfills Clean Water Act requirements and addresses EPA Integrated Report guidance, but also acts as a useful reference for the general population. To achieve this goal, we have implemented a series of changes to the report for the 2008 submission.

One of the largest changes from 2006 is to the actual report structure. An effort has been made to address water quality reporting in the state in a more concise manner. This approach has distinct advantages for our target audience - the 18 million residents of New York State. By condensing and rearranging the report, the integrity and factualness of past 305(b) reports is not lost. Rather, we present the information that we believe provides the most comprehensive summary of water quality in the state. The main report follows the process that we follow to generate our 305(b) and 303(d) water quality assessments - monitoring, assessment then listing. The final Section 303(d) list and 305(b) assessments, as well as current (as of May 31, 2008) Priority Waterbodies List assessments can be found within the main body.

In addition to changes to the format, sections that once appeared in the narrative report may now be referenced as a website. This will allow for greater interactivity and act to streamline the overall report. Contact information, related links and supplemental pages can be accessed from these websites. A list of relevant websites can be found in Appendix F of the 2008 305(b) Water Quality Report. We invite you to visit our redesigned main website at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/290.html> to learn more about our water programs.

We hope that this report will act as a useful and relevant reference for water quality information in New York State.