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# EPA Withdraws Objections to Steel Plant Water Permit

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**U.S. Steel Wastewater Permit**  
Gary, Indiana

October 2009

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## For more information

You may review the permit documents (technical fact sheet, draft permit and attachments) on IDEM's Web site at [www.idem.IN.gov](http://www.idem.IN.gov).

You may direct questions to the IDEM Office of Water Quality Permits Branch at 800-451-6027, Ext. 2-8631. Or contact:

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## Background

IDEM originally produced a draft wastewater permit for U.S. Steel in July 2007 and sought public comments on the document. EPA Region 5 reviewed the draft permit and objected to it in October 2007.

In December of that year, Region 5 held a public hearing to listen to public comments on its objections. Since then, EPA has reviewed the hundreds of comments received and has worked closely with IDEM as the state agency developed a new permit to resolve the objections.

U.S. Steel's Gary Works is the largest fully integrated steel mill in North America and is able to produce more than 8 million tons of raw steel per year. Gary Works discharges water used in its operations into both the Grand Calumet River and Lake Michigan.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 plans to drop its objections to a wastewater permit for U.S. Steel's Gary Works in Gary, Ind., after the state proposes a revised permit that takes into account EPA's objections and those of the public.

The permit is required under the Clean Water Act's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, or NPDES. Indiana Department of Environmental Management is expected to issue a new draft permit Wednesday, Oct. 14, and then seek public comments. EPA Region 5 plans to officially withdraw its objections the following day.

At the same time, EPA will release its response to public comments received at a 2007 public hearing on Region 5's objections to the original IDEM draft permit. The response to comments will be posted online at [www.epa.gov/region5/sites/ussteel](http://www.epa.gov/region5/sites/ussteel).

When IDEM announces the new draft permit, it will open another 45-day public comment period. Additionally, EPA Region 5 will review the new draft NPDES permit carefully, as well as any significant public comments IDEM receives.

The two agencies are working closely together, and public participation has been and continues to be an important part of the permit process. Many of the public comments IDEM received on the original permit were similar to concerns the federal agency had raised, and they were taken into consideration by IDEM in its drafting of the revised permit.

## NPDES permits help the environment

The Clean Water Act requires those responsible for discharges from any point source into the "waters of the United States" to obtain an NPDES permit. The permit contains the conditions the applicant must meet in order to comply with the Clean Water Act to safeguard public health and the environment. These permits cover different activities and different types of discharges, including discharges from industrial facilities like U.S. Steel's Gary Works.

In Indiana, IDEM has the authority to issue NPDES permits for wastewater discharges within the state. However, EPA may object to the issuance of a permit when in the Agency's opinion it does not comply with the requirements of federal laws.

