

Interstate Environmental Commission

Working for New Jersey



About Us

The Interstate Environmental Commission (IEC) is a tri-state agency committed to protecting, conserving, and restoring New Jersey's environment, particularly in the area of water quality. One of IEC's most valuable resources is its independent, accredited environmental laboratory. IEC's laboratory primarily analyzes non-potable water samples collected throughout the tri-state area in conjunction with coordinated projects designed to support IEC's mission. The laboratory holds primary National Environmental Laboratory Approval Program (NELAP) accreditation through the Environmental Laboratory Approval Program (ELAP) of the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and secondary accreditation through the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Office of Quality Assurance.



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How We Are Funded

According to the IEC's Tri-State Compact, each member state must appropriate funds to support the IEC. In the 2025 fiscal year, New Jersey contributed \$15,000, or 0.13%, of IEC's total funding from its state fiscal budget. While the majority of IEC's funding comes from federal grants, state appropriations are critical for IEC to meet the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 106 grant non-federal match requirement.



Education and Public Information

IEC participates in and welcomes opportunities to collaborate with educators, organizations, and the public to promote awareness of water quality issues and environmental stewardship. In 2025, IEC participated in two marine science festivals- SubMerge, coordinated by **Hudson River Park Trust**, and City of Water Day, coordinated by **Waterfront Alliance and New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program (HEP)**. In addition, IEC hosted its third annual open house and welcomed tours to science professionals, artists, and partners. Staff presented posters at various water quality events throughout the year and participated in multiple conferences, including BioBAT's Currents of Change symposium and the annual HEP conference.

Partnerships

The goal of IEC's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is to provide technical input and feedback to help evaluate IEC's water quality projects, build upon and strengthen regional partnerships, and pursue new sources of funding. In addition to the TAC, IEC actively participates in many stakeholder initiatives to enhance communication and coordination of water quality efforts within the district. IEC's executive director serves as co-chair of the Subcommittee for Continuous Monitoring Practitioners with the NY-NJ Harbor & Estuary Program and represents IEC as a member in the New Jersey Water Monitoring Council and the NY-NJ Harbor & Estuary Program Management Committee and Water Quality Workgroup.



NY-NJ Harbor Monitoring Network

In 2021, IEC initiated a Harbor Monitoring Network funded by the **New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection** (NJDEP). The project focuses on the New York-New Jersey Harbor and its tributaries and works to assess water quality at sites where data is currently lacking. Many of the sites, selected by NJDEP, have not been evaluated since their water quality classifications in 1985 and the data gathered by IEC will be used to determine whether these sites' classifications need to be updated. In addition, these data may be used to inform a system-wide model to better understand dissolved oxygen concentrations and potential impacts to these concentrations. The program includes monitoring and sampling on the Hackensack River, Passaic River, Newark Bay, Raritan Bay, Arthur Kill, Kill van Kull, Hudson River, Upper Bay, Lower Bay, and a few smaller New Jersey tributaries. Testing provided by IEC includes bacteriological, nutrients, turbidity, and in-situ parameters. In 2025, IEC expanded its laboratory and now has the capacity to perform in-house testing for metals and dissolved organic carbon.



Continuous Monitoring in New Jersey Waters

In coordination with NJDEP, IEC is currently implementing four sondes throughout the waters of New Jersey to take continuous measurements of water quality. Sites were selected by NJDEP based on areas with historic water quality issues or lack of data. In April of 2025, the first sonde was installed in the lower Hackensack River, where it recorded water quality measurements through November (it was removed for the winter). When it is available, data from this location will be uploaded to NJDEP DWM&S Continuous Data Monitoring Program, which provides public access to continuous water quality data from many waterbodies across New Jersey. The other three sites are pending local access permissions and will be located in the upper Hackensack River, the lower Passaic River, and the Arthur Kill.

Support for Participatory Science

Since 2016, the volunteer monitoring, or participatory science, program has been an opportunity for community members to participate in ambient water quality monitoring surveys. Volunteers from community groups collect data with the help of IEC staff and laboratory services to better understand their local waters. Funded through IEC's CWA Section 106 assistance agreement awarded through EPA Region 2, this program targets public access areas not routinely monitored by established programs or agencies and focuses on pathogen indicators, such as *Fecal Coliform* and *Enterococcus*. Participatory scientists gain important knowledge about water quality monitoring and sample collection protocols necessary for the generation of high-quality data. In 2025, this program included three groups in New Jersey: **Hackensack Riverkeeper**, **Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership**, and **Rahway River Watershed Association**. In addition, the Hudson River Park Trust, based in NY, samples in the shared waters of the Hudson River.



USGS NY-NJ Harbor Monitoring

Through funding provided by NJDEP and passed through IEC, **United States Geological Survey** (USGS) will be producing dissolved oxygen data in Newark Bay and the Kill Van Kull, two waterways shared between New Jersey and New York in which high levels of urban and industrial pollution have adversely affected dissolved oxygen, causing hypoxia and impaired ecosystem functions. Currently, NY and NJ regulatory agencies have different regulatory standards for dissolved oxygen. This survey aims to mitigate that by conducting a 24-hour water quality study in order to provide a baseline dataset that captures variability and fluxes throughout the day. These data will allow for better coordination in regulatory and restoration efforts in order to help design future monitoring, identify hotspots, and fully protect aquatic life under HEP's action agenda.

Short-Notice Sampling Response

IEC has the capability to perform short-notice inspections- sampling, monitoring, and analyses- in response to regional environmental emergencies, concerns, or natural disasters under an EPA approved Quality Assurance Project Plan. In 2025, in conjunction with the **New York State Department of Environmental Conservation**, IEC responded to a report of illegal dumping at a wastewater treatment facility by quickly conducting an inspection and collecting samples for analyses in order to ensure compliance and water safety. The ability to mobilize and perform sampling quickly at the request of local agencies makes IEC a valuable resource in times of need.