

SYNOPSIS
Proposed Amendments to the Rules for Water Quality Control,
Chapter 391-3-6

The proposed amendments to the Rules for Water Quality Control, Chapter 391-3-6, would amend Rule 391-3-6-.17 to remove references to the Georgia Department of Agriculture’s rules regarding soil amendments and to remove a paragraph regarding the effective date of the rule.

Purpose: Rule 391-3-6-.17 regulates the management of sewage sludge (biosolids) generated by wastewater treatment plants and is tied to EPA’s standards for the use or disposal of sewage sludge, 40 CFR Part 503. Under a separate state authority, the Georgia Department of Agriculture regulates soil amendments and has proposed revisions to those regulations. To eliminate potential confusion and prevent inconsistencies, EPD proposes to remove references to the Georgia Department of Agriculture’s regulations from the sewage sludge (biosolids) rules.

Main Features: The proposed amendments will remove references to the Department of Agriculture’s rules that are currently included in subparagraph (3)(c), which addresses exclusions to coverage, and in subparagraph (10)(e), which addresses management practices. The proposed amendments will also remove paragraph (25), regarding the effective date of the rule, as this paragraph is obsolete and unnecessary.

RULES FOR WATER QUALITY CONTROL, CHAPTER 391-3-6

391-3-6-.17, “Sewage Sludge (Biosolids) Requirements” is being amended to remove references to Georgia Department of Agriculture rules in subparagraphs (3)(c) and (10)(e), and to remove paragraph (25) regarding the effective date of the rule.

STATEMENT OF RATIONALE
Proposed Amendments to the Rules for Water Quality Control,
Chapter 391-3-6

Rule 391-3-6-.17 regulates the management of sewage sludge (biosolids) generated by wastewater treatment plants. The Rule is directly tied to EPA’s standards for the use or disposal of sewage sludge, 40 CFR Part 503. Sewage sludge is a by-product of wastewater treatment plant operations and, under these regulations, may be disposed of through land application subject to various requirements that prevent harm to the environment. Earlier this year, the Georgia Department of Agriculture proposed amendments to their rules regarding soil amendments. Under their regulations, certain types of sewage sludge may be registered as soil amendments. Discussion and feedback on the soil amendments rule changes have highlighted the importance of making clear distinctions between EPD’s sewage sludge (biosolids) regulations and the soil amendment regulations. Removing the references to the Georgia Department of Agriculture’s rules on soil amendments will help to eliminate potential confusion

and prevent any potential inconsistencies between future changes to the soil amendment regulations and EPD's regulations.

The rule amendments will also support the ability of these rules to remain consistent with potential future revisions to EPA's guidance under 40 CFR Part 503, including any future guidance to states on the management of biosolids with regard to emerging contaminants such as PFAS.

EPD also proposes to remove an obsolete paragraph regarding the effective date of the rule.