

Delaware River Basin Commission:



Managing, Protecting & Improving the Basin's Water Resources Since 1961



*White House ceremonial signing of the
Delaware River Basin Compact, Nov. 2, 1961.*

A breakthrough in water resources management occurred in 1961 when President Kennedy and the governors of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Delaware for the first time signed concurrent compact legislation into law creating a regional body with the force of law to oversee a unified approach to managing a river system without regard to political boundaries.

The members of this regional body -- the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) -- include the four basin state governors and the Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers North Atlantic Division, who serves as the federal representative. The five members appoint alternate Commissioners, with the governors selecting high-ranking officials from their state environmental agencies. Each Commissioner has one vote of equal power with a majority vote needed to decide most issues. Exceptions are votes to apportion among the signatory parties amounts required to support the current expense budget and votes to declare a state of emergency resulting from a drought or catastrophe, which require unanimity.

Commission programs include water quality protection, water supply allocation, regulatory review, water conservation initiatives, watershed planning, drought management, flood loss reduction, education/outreach and recreation. The DRBC is funded by its signatory parties, project review fees, water use charges, compliance revenues and grants.

Annual elections are held for Commission chair, vice chair and second vice chair, based on a rotation of the five signatory parties. Delaware Governor Matt Meyer is currently serving as chair for the July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, term. The other Commission members are Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro (vice chair), New Jersey Governor Philip D. Murphy (second vice chair), New York Governor Kathy Hochul and Federal Representative Brigadier General John P. Lloyd.

The Commission holds business meetings and hearings on policy matters and water resource projects under regulatory review. These sessions, along with meetings of the Commission's advisory committees, are open to the public.

DRBC: A Model Framework

- ◆ DRBC was formed in response to major water resource challenges requiring regional solutions, and to this day is a successful model for federal-state collaboration.
- ◆ DRBC is an effective forum for managing the Basin's interstate water resources holistically and adaptively.
- ◆ In its 60+ years, DRBC has achieved many noteworthy accomplishments, including:
 - ⇒ DRBC regulations helped dramatically improve dissolved oxygen levels in the Delaware Estuary, allowing for resident and migratory fish populations to thrive;
 - ⇒ DRBC's Special Protection Waters program protects the existing high quality waters of the river's non-tidal watershed;
 - ⇒ DRBC's Pollutant Minimization Plan regulations have helped to significantly reduce PCB loadings to the river;
 - ⇒ DRBC has been recognized for its comprehensive water conservation, drought management and watershed planning programs.

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