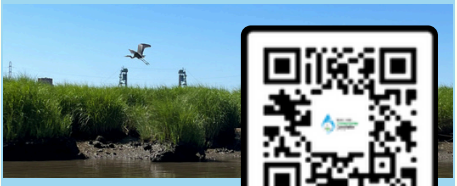
January 2025

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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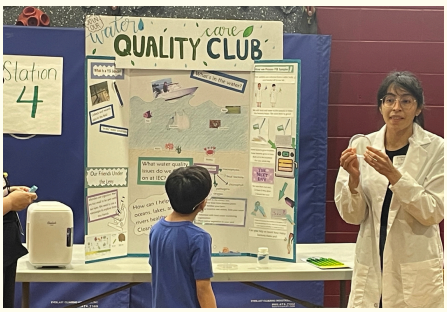
How We Are Funded

According to the IEC's Tri-State Compact, each member state must appropriate funds to support the IEC. In the 2024 fiscal year, New Jersey contributed $15,000, or 0.7%, 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 2024, IEC hosted its second annual open house, welcomed laboratory tours for high schools, universities, and science professionals, participated in SubMerge, a marine science festival coordinated by Hudson River Park Trust, and presented at a school career fair in North Plainfield.

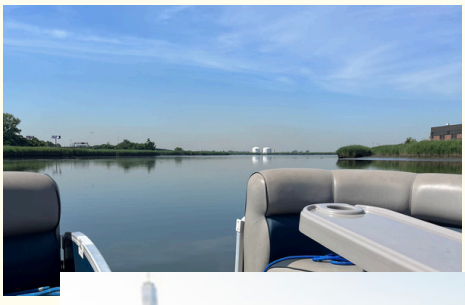
Partnerships

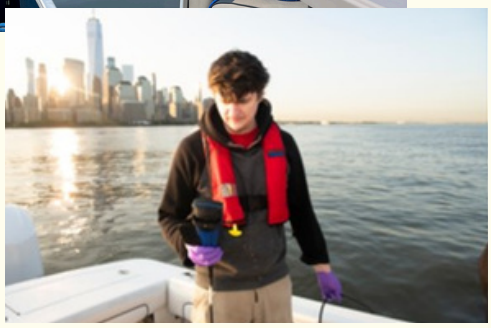
The goal of IEC's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is to provide technical input and feedback to help evaluate IEC's water quality projects, build upon and strengthen regional partnerships, and pursue new sources of funding. In addition to the TAC, IEC actively participates in many stakeholder initiatives 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.

BioBAT Art Space Opening

In May of 2024, the BioBAT Art Space, located on the ground floor of BioBAT beneath IEC's laboratory, opened its new exhibit focusing on the intersection between science and art. The exhibit features a collaborative set of artworks based on IEC's monitoring created by artist Yoko Shimuzu.

NY-NJ Harbor Monitoring Network

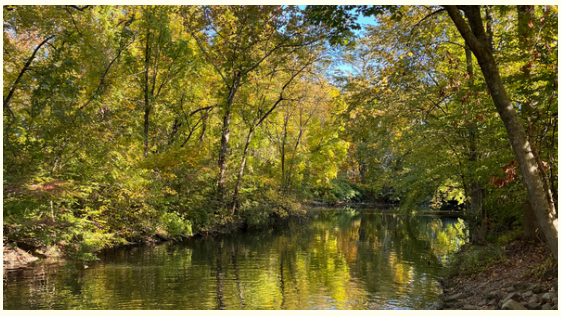




In 2021, IEC initiated a Harbor Monitoring Network funded by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. The project focuses on the New York-New Jersey Harbor and its tributaries and works to assess water quality at sites where data is currently lacking. Many of the sites, selected by NJDEP, 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. Metals and dissolved organic carbon (DOC) are sent to partner laboratories for testing.

Continuous Monitoring in New Jersey Waters

In coordination with NJDEP, IEC is planning on implementing four sondes throughout the waters of New Jersey that will take continuous measurements of water quality. The sites where continuous monitoring will occur, selected by NJDEP based on areas with historic water quality issues or lack of data, include: The upper Hackensack River, the lower Hackensack River, the lower Passaic River, and the Arthur Kill.



Support for Citizen Science

Since 2016, our volunteer monitoring, or citizen 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*. Citizen scientists gain important knowledge about water quality monitoring and sample collection protocols necessary for the generation of high-quality data. In 2024, 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.

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 QAPP. In 2023, in conjunction with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), IEC responded to short-notice sampling at drinking water fountains at a school being used as a migrant shelter in order to ensure the water's safety. The ability to mobilize and perform sampling quickly at the request of local agencies makes IEC a valuable resource in times of need.