FAQS: New Public Comment Form

In August 2020, the Water Quality Control Division (division) is piloting a Google form for its public comments. Here are some responses to some frequently asked questions about the pilot.

Why is the division doing this?

The division has found that transferring pieces of comments from PDFs into charts and then organizing those comments by permit topic takes considerable permit section resources (sometimes, for large permits, several weeks of a permit writer's time). The division has limited resources for permit writers and permits administrative staff and subsequently faces a backlog of permit renewals. The division believes this time is better spent conducting permit calculations and research, evaluating and responding to these comments, and drafting the final permits for issuance.

The current state budget shortfall has worsened this situation and the permits section has not been able to fill a number of permit writing vacancies.

The division's hope is that this new form will be an easy way for the public to submit comments on permits and for the division to quickly start reviewing and responding to them. A similar approach to public comments has been taken in other states and other CDPHE divisions.

Can I comment on the permit fact sheet in addition to the permit through this form?

Yes. You will be able to go through each document and document section and provide comments.

Does the form have a word and comment limit?

The form has both word and comment limits, but they are large. They are 20 comments per main section of the permit, and each comment is 32,000 characters long. If you need to make more comments, you can start a new form.
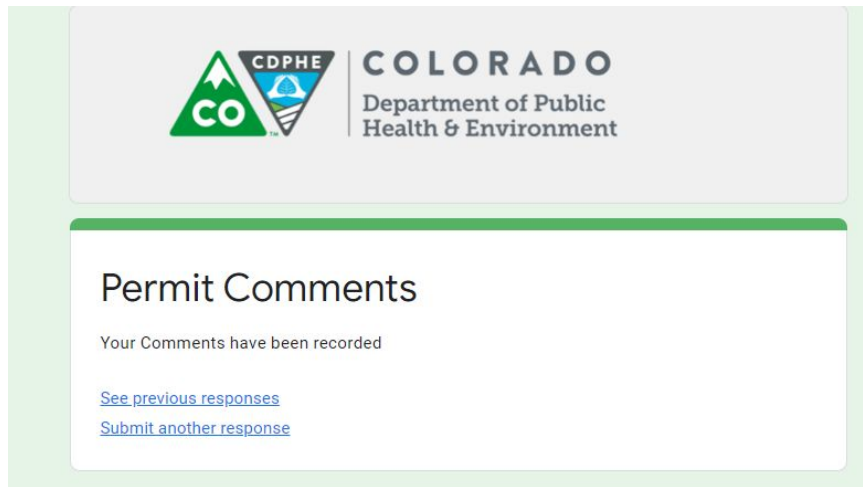
Can I save the form in progress?

Yes, as long as you use a Google email. The Google based form will save once you click submit and then you may use the receipt sent to the Google email provided to go back into your submission to change or add to your comments.

If you do not have a Google account, at this time we do not have the capability to save your response before you submit it.

How will I know you got my comments?
If you used a Google account you will see a confirmation page and you will receive a confirmation email with a copy of your comments.

If you did not use a Google account you will see a confirmation page to confirm the submission.

How will the division provide responses to the comments?
The division will continue to respond to comments in the final fact sheet after the public comment period is over.

How will the permittee see comments submitted by other parties?
The division will continue to post all of the comments to the public permit file available at online. In addition you can see others' comments by selecting see previous responses after you submit the form.

How will I submit reference documents?
At the end of the Google form is an option to attach documents if you have signed in with a Google email. If you did not use a Google email, you may email those documents to the permit writer. In either case, please make sure to describe and refer to the documents in your comments made through the form. If you just email them to us without referring to them in your comments, the division may not respond to them through the fact sheet.

What if I have problems with this new process?
Please tell us! This is a pilot and we want to hear your feedback. Please be as specific as possible and if you have any ideas about how to fix it. Please send your general feedback about this process to Meg Parish at meg.parish@state.co.us. In addition, if you are struggling

with submitting your comments through the form at all, you may reach out to Veronica Kenkel at veronica.kenkel@state.co.us for technical assistance.