

DEP's tiered data acceptance strategies follow the same general tiered framework as described in Table 1 of the Chesapeake Bay Monitoring Cooperative's [Prioritization Report](#). Tier 1 data is generally defined as educational or environmental screening data that has known quality and a study plan but does not follow DEP or EPA quality assurance plans. These data will not be used for regulatory assessment purposes, but can be used by DEP to highlight areas of interest for future monitoring efforts. Tier 2 data have clearly defined quality assurance plans and procedures, but may not have followed approved DEP data collection protocols. These data may not be used for assessment purposes, but can be used for other purposes such as trend or performance analysis. Tier 3 data are assessment level data that have approved quality assurance plans, follow appropriate study designs, and followed DEP data collection protocols. Individuals seeking to provide DEP with tier 3 data must also be audited by DEP staff before submitting data.