

allotted. Decisions of a State regarding any particular public water system as part of a capacity development strategy are not subject to review by EPA and may not serve as a basis for withholding funds.

(iii) *Operator certification program.* Beginning on February 5, 2001, EPA will withhold 20 percent of a State's allotment unless the State has adopted and is implementing a program for certifying operators of community and non-transient, noncommunity public water systems that meets the requirements of section 1419 of the Act. The determination of withholding will be based on an assessment of the status of the State program for each fiscal year.

(2) *Maximum withholdings.* The maximum amount of funds that will be withheld if a State fails to meet the requirements of both the capacity development authority and the capacity development strategy provisions is 20 percent of the allotment in any fiscal year. The maximum amount of funds that will be withheld if a State fails to meet the requirements of the operator certification program provision and either the capacity development authority provision or the capacity development strategy provision is 40 percent of the allotment in any fiscal year.

(3) *Reallotment of withheld funds.* The Administrator will reallot withheld funds to eligible States based on the formula originally used to allot these funds. In order to be eligible to receive reallotted funds under the withholding provisions, a State must have been obligated all funds it is eligible to receive from EPA during the period of availability. A State that has funds withheld under any one of the withholding provisions in paragraphs (b)(1)(i) through (b)(1)(iii) of this section is not eligible to receive reallotted funds made available by that provision.

(4) *Termination of withholdings.* A withholding will cease to apply to funds appropriated in the next fiscal year after a State complies with the specific provision under which funds were withheld.

**§ 35.3520 Systems, projects, and project-related costs eligible for assistance from the Fund.**

(a) *Eligible systems.* Assistance from the Fund may only be provided to:

(1) Privately-owned and publicly-owned community water systems and non-profit noncommunity water systems.

(2) Projects that will result in the creation of a community water system in accordance with paragraph (b)(2)(vi) of this section.

(3) Systems referred to in section 1401(4)(B) of the Act for the purposes of point of entry or central treatment under section 1401(4)(B)(i)(III).

(b) *Eligible projects—*(1) *General.* Projects that address present or prevent future violations of health-based drinking water standards are eligible for assistance. These include projects needed to maintain compliance with existing national primary drinking water regulations for contaminants with acute and chronic health effects. Projects to replace aging infrastructure are eligible for assistance if they are needed to maintain compliance or further the public health protection objectives of the Act.

(2) Only the following project categories are eligible for assistance from the Fund:

(i) *Treatment.* Examples of projects include installation or upgrade of facilities to improve the quality of drinking water to comply with primary or secondary standards and point of entry or central treatment under section 1401(4)(B)(i)(III) of the Act.

(ii) *Transmission and distribution.* Examples of projects include installation or replacement of transmission and distribution pipes to improve water pressure to safe levels or to prevent contamination caused by leaks or breaks in the pipes.

(iii) *Source.* Examples of projects include rehabilitation of wells or development of eligible sources to replace contaminated sources.

(iv) *Storage.* Examples of projects include installation or upgrade of eligible storage facilities, including finished water reservoirs, to prevent microbiological contaminants from entering a public water system.

(v) *Consolidation.* Eligible projects are those needed to consolidate water supplies where, for example, a supply has become contaminated or a system is unable to maintain compliance for technical, financial, or managerial reasons.

(vi) *Creation of new systems.* Eligible projects are those that, upon completion, will create a community water system to address existing public health problems with serious risks caused by unsafe drinking water provided by individual wells or surface water sources. Eligible projects are also those that create a new regional community water system by consolidating existing systems that have technical, financial, or managerial difficulties. Projects to address existing public health problems associated with individual wells or surface water sources must be limited in scope to the specific geographic area affected by contamination. Projects that create new regional community water systems by consolidating existing systems must be limited in scope to the service area of the systems being consolidated. A project must be a cost-effective solution to addressing the problem. A State must ensure that the applicant has given sufficient public notice to potentially affected parties and has considered alternative solutions to addressing the problem. Capacity to serve future population growth cannot be a substantial portion of a project.

(c) *Eligible project-related costs.* In addition to costs needed for the project itself, the following project-related costs are eligible for assistance from the Fund:

(1) Costs for planning and design and associated pre-project costs. A State that makes a loan for only planning and design is not required to provide assistance for completion of the project.

(2) Costs for the acquisition of land only if needed for the purposes of locating eligible project components. The land must be acquired from a willing seller.

(3) Costs for restructuring systems that are in significant noncompliance with any national primary drinking water regulation or variance or that lack the technical, financial, and man-

agerial capability to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Act, unless the systems are ineligible under paragraph (d)(2) or (d)(3) of this section.

(d) *Ineligible systems.* Assistance from the Fund may not be provided to:

(1) Federally-owned public water systems and for-profit noncommunity water systems.

(2) Systems that lack the technical, financial, and managerial capability to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Act, unless the assistance will ensure compliance and the owners or operators of the systems agree to undertake feasible and appropriate changes in operations to ensure compliance over the long-term.

(3) Systems that are in significant noncompliance with any national primary drinking water regulation or variance, unless:

(i) The purpose of the assistance is to address the cause of the significant noncompliance and will ensure that the systems return to compliance; or

(ii) The purpose of the assistance is unrelated to the cause of the significant noncompliance and the systems are on enforcement schedules (for maximum contaminant level and treatment technique violations) or have compliance plans (for monitoring and reporting violations) to return to compliance.

(e) *Ineligible projects.* The following projects are ineligible for assistance from the Fund:

(1) Dams or rehabilitation of dams.

(2) Water rights, except if the water rights are owned by a system that is being purchased through consolidation as part of a capacity development strategy.

(3) Reservoirs or rehabilitation of reservoirs, except for finished water reservoirs and those reservoirs that are part of the treatment process and are on the property where the treatment facility is located.

(4) Projects needed primarily for fire protection.

(5) Projects needed primarily to serve future population growth. Projects must be sized only to accommodate a reasonable amount of population growth expected to occur over the useful life of the facility.

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(6) Projects that have received assistance from the national set-aside for Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Villages under section 1452(i) of the Act.

(f) *Ineligible project-related costs.* The following project-related costs are ineligible for assistance from the Fund:

(1) Laboratory fees for routine compliance monitoring.

(2) Operation and maintenance expenses.

### **§ 35.3525 Authorized types of assistance from the Fund.**

A State may only provide the following types of assistance from the Fund:

(a) *Loans.* (1) A State may make loans at or below the market interest rate, including zero interest rate loans. Loans may be awarded only if:

(i) An assistance recipient begins annual repayment of principal and interest no later than one year after project completion. A project is completed when operations are initiated or are capable of being initiated.

(ii) A recipient completes loan repayment no later than 20 years after project completion except as provided in paragraph (b)(3) of this section.

(iii) A recipient establishes a dedicated source of revenue for repayment of the loan which is consistent with local ordinances and State laws or, for privately-owned systems, a recipient demonstrates that there is adequate security to assure repayment of the loan.

(2) A State may include eligible project reimbursement costs within loans if:

(i) A system received approval, authorization to proceed, or any similar action by a State prior to initiation of project construction and the construction costs were incurred after such State action; and

(ii) The project met all of the requirements of this subpart and was on the State's fundable list, developed using a priority system approved by EPA. A project on the comprehensive list which is funded when a project on the fundable list is bypassed using the State's bypass procedures in accordance with § 35.3555(c)(2)(ii) may be eligible for reimbursement of costs incurred after the system has been informed that it will receive funding.

(3) A State may include eligible planning and design and other associated pre-project costs within loans regardless of when the costs were incurred.

(4) All payments of principal and interest on each loan must be credited to the Fund.

(5) Of the total amount available for assistance from the Fund each year, a State must make at least 15 percent available solely for providing loan assistance to small systems, to the extent such funds can be obligated for eligible projects. A State that provides assistance in an amount that is greater than 15 percent of the available funds in one year may credit the excess toward the 15 percent requirement in future years.

(6) A State may provide incremental assistance for a project (e.g., for a particularly large, expensive project) over a period of years.

(b) *Assistance to disadvantaged communities.* (1) A State may provide loan subsidies (e.g., loans which include principal forgiveness, negative interest rate loans) to benefit communities meeting the State's definition of "disadvantaged" or which the State expects to become "disadvantaged" as a result of the project. Loan subsidies in the form of reduced interest rate loans that are at or above zero percent do not fall under the 30 percent allowance described in paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

(2) A State may take an amount equal to no more than 30 percent of the amount of a particular fiscal year's capitalization grant to provide loan subsidies to disadvantaged communities. If a State does not take the entire 30 percent allowance associated with a particular fiscal year's capitalization grant, it cannot reserve the authority to take the remaining balance of the allowance from future capitalization grants. In addition, a State must:

(i) Indicate in the Intended Use Plan (IUP) the amount of the allowance it is taking for loan subsidies;

(ii) Commit capitalization grant and required State match dollars taken for loan subsidies in accordance with the binding commitment requirements in § 35.3550(e); and