

SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1996

[As Amended Through P.L. 117-263, Enacted December 23, 2022]

【Currency: This publication is a compilation of the text of Public Law 104-182. It was last amended by the public law listed in the As Amended Through note above and below at the bottom of each page of the pdf version and reflects current law through the date of the enactment of the public law listed at <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/comps>】

【Note: While this publication does not represent an official version of any Federal statute, substantial efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of its contents. The official version of Federal law is found in the United States Statutes at Large and in the United States Code. The legal effect to be given to the Statutes at Large and the United States Code is established by statute (1 U.S.C. 112, 204).】

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SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the “Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996”.

【42 U.S.C. 201 nt】

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SEC. 2. REFERENCES; EFFECTIVE DATE; DISCLAIMER.

(a) **REFERENCES TO SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT.**—Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to that section or other provision of title XIV of the Public Health Service Act (commonly known as the “Safe Drinking Water Act”) (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.).

(b) 【42 U.S.C. 300f note】 **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—Except as otherwise specified in this Act or in the amendments made by this Act, this Act and the amendments made by this Act shall take effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

(c) 【42 U.S.C. 300f note】 **DISCLAIMER.**—Except for the provisions of section 302 (relating to transfers of funds), nothing in this Act or in any amendments made by this Act or title XIV of the Public Health Service Act (commonly known as the “Safe Drinking Water Act”) or any other law shall be construed by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency or the courts as affecting, modifying, expanding, changing, or altering—

- (1) the provisions of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act;
- (2) the duties and responsibilities of the Administrator under that Act; or
- (3) the regulation or control of point or nonpoint sources of pollution discharged into waters covered by that Act.

The Administrator shall identify in the agency’s annual budget all funding and full-time equivalents administering such title XIV sep-

arately from funding and staffing for the Federal Water Pollution Control Act.

SEC. 3. [42 U.S.C. 300f note] FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that—

(1) safe drinking water is essential to the protection of public health;

(2) because the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.) now exceed the financial and technical capacity of some public water systems, especially many small public water systems, the Federal Government needs to provide assistance to communities to help the communities meet Federal drinking water requirements;

(3) the Federal Government commits to maintaining and improving its partnership with the States in the administration and implementation of the Safe Drinking Water Act;

(4) States play a central role in the implementation of safe drinking water programs, and States need increased financial resources and appropriate flexibility to ensure the prompt and effective development and implementation of drinking water programs;

(5) the existing process for the assessment and selection of additional drinking water contaminants needs to be revised and improved to ensure that there is a sound scientific basis for setting priorities in establishing drinking water regulations;

(6) procedures for assessing the health effects of contaminants establishing drinking water standards should be revised to provide greater opportunity for public education and participation;

(7) in considering the appropriate level of regulation for contaminants in drinking water, risk assessment, based on sound and objective science, and benefit-cost analysis are important analytical tools for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of drinking water regulations to protect human health;

(8) more effective protection of public health requires—

(A) a Federal commitment to set priorities that will allow scarce Federal, State, and local resources to be targeted toward the drinking water problems of greatest public health concern;

(B) maximizing the value of the different and complementary strengths and responsibilities of the Federal and State governments in those States that have primary enforcement responsibility for the Safe Drinking Water Act; and

(C) prevention of drinking water contamination through well-trained system operators, water systems with adequate managerial, technical, and financial capacity, and enhanced protection of source waters of public water systems;

(9) compliance with the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act continues to be a concern at public water systems experiencing technical and financial limitations, and Federal, State, and local governments need more resources and more ef-

fective authority to attain the objectives of the Safe Drinking Water Act; and

(10) consumers served by public water systems should be provided with information on the source of the water they are drinking and its quality and safety, as well as prompt notification of any violation of drinking water regulations.

TITLE I—AMENDMENTS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT

SEC. 101. DEFINITIONS.

(a)

(b) PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM.—

(1)

(2) [42 U.S.C. 300f note] GAO STUDY.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall undertake a study to—

(A) ascertain the numbers and locations of individuals and households relying for their residential water needs, including drinking, bathing, and cooking (or other similar uses) on irrigation water systems, mining water systems, industrial water systems, or other water systems covered by section 1401(4)(B) of the Safe Drinking Water Act that are not public water systems subject to the Safe Drinking Water Act;

(B) determine the sources and costs and affordability (to users and systems) of water used by such populations for their residential water needs; and

(C) review State and water system compliance with the exclusion provisions of section 1401(4)(B) of such Act.

The Comptroller General shall submit a report to the Congress within 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act containing the results of such study.

SEC. 102. GENERAL AUTHORITY.

(a)

(b) APPLICABILITY OF PRIOR REQUIREMENTS.—The requirements of subparagraphs (C) and (D) of section 1412(b)(3) of the Safe Drinking Water Act as in effect before the date of enactment of this Act, and any obligation to promulgate regulations pursuant to such subparagraphs not promulgated as of the date of enactment of this Act, are superseded by the amendments made by subsection (a).

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SEC. 104. STANDARD-SETTING.

(a)

(b) DISINFECTANTS AND DISINFECTION BYPRODUCTS.—The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency may use the authority of section 1412(b)(5) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (as amended by this Act) to promulgate the Stage I and Stage II Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rules as proposed in volume 59, Federal Register, page 38668 (July 29, 1994). The considerations used in the development of the July 29, 1994, proposed na-

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tional primary drinking water regulation on disinfectants and disinfection byproducts shall be treated as consistent with such section 1412(b)(5) for purposes of such Stage I and Stage II rules.

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SEC. 114. PUBLIC NOTIFICATION.

(a)

(b) BOTTLED WATER STUDY.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Food and Drug Administration, in consultation with the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, shall publish for public notice and comment a draft study on the feasibility of appropriate methods, if any, of informing customers of the contents of bottled water. The Administrator of the Food and Drug Administration shall publish a final study not later than 30 months after the date of enactment of this Act.

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SEC. 117. EXEMPTIONS.

(a)

(b) LIMITED ADDITIONAL COMPLIANCE PERIOD.—(1) The State of New York, on a case-by-case basis and after notice and an opportunity of at least 60 days for public comment, may allow an additional period for compliance with the Surface Water Treatment Rule established pursuant to section 1412(b)(7)(C) of the Safe Drinking Water Act in the case of unfiltered systems in Essex, Columbia, Greene, Dutchess, Rensselaer, Schoharie, Saratoga, Washington, and Warren Counties serving a population of less than 5,000, which meet appropriate disinfection requirements and have adequate watershed protections, so long as the State determines that the public health will be protected during the duration of the additional compliance period and the system agrees to implement appropriate control measures as determined by the State.

(2) The additional compliance period referred to in paragraph (1) shall expire on the earlier of the date 3 years after the date on which the Administrator identifies appropriate control technology for the Surface Water Treatment Rule for public water systems in the category that includes such system pursuant to section 1412(b)(4)(E) of the Safe Drinking Water Act or 5 years after the date of enactment of the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996.

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SEC. 133. SOURCE WATER PETITION PROGRAM.

(a)

(b) SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the Congress that each State in establishing priorities under section 606(c)(1) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act should give special consideration to projects that are eligible for funding under that Act and have been recommended pursuant to a petition submitted under section 1454 of the Safe Drinking Water Act.

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TITLE II—DRINKING WATER RESEARCH

SEC. 201. DRINKING WATER RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION.

Other than amounts authorized to be appropriated to the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency under other titles of this Act, there are authorized to be appropriated such additional sums as may be necessary for drinking water research for fiscal years 1997 through 2003. The annual total of such additional sums authorized to be appropriated under this section shall not exceed \$26,593,000.

SEC. 202. [42 U.S.C. 300j-1 note] SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH REVIEW.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall—

(1) develop a strategic plan for drinking water research activities throughout the Environmental Protection Agency (in this section referred to as the “Agency”);

(2) integrate that strategic plan into ongoing Agency planning activities; and

(3) review all Agency drinking water research to ensure the research—

(A) is of high quality; and

(B) does not duplicate any other research being conducted by the Agency.

(b) PLAN.—The Administrator shall transmit the plan to the Committees on Commerce and Science of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate and the plan shall be made available to the public.

SEC. 203. [42 U.S.C. 300j-1 note] NATIONAL CENTER FOR GROUND WATER RESEARCH.

The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, acting through the Robert S. Kerr Environmental Research Laboratory, is authorized to reestablish a partnership between the Laboratory and the National Center for Ground Water Research, a university consortium, to conduct research, training, and technology transfer for ground water quality protection and restoration. No funds are authorized by this section.

TITLE III—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

SEC. 301. WATER RETURN FLOWS.

Section 3013 of Public Law 102-486 (42 U.S.C. 13551) is repealed.

SEC. 302. [42 U.S.C. 300j-12 note] TRANSFER OF FUNDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, at any time after the date 1 year after a State establishes a State loan fund pursuant to section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act but prior to fiscal year 2002, a Governor of the State may—

(1) reserve up to 33 percent of a capitalization grant made pursuant to such section 1452 and add the funds reserved to any funds provided to the State pursuant to section 601 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1381); and

(2) reserve in any year a dollar amount up to the dollar amount that may be reserved under paragraph (1) for that year from capitalization grants made pursuant to section 601 of such Act (33 U.S.C. 1381) and add the reserved funds to any funds provided to the State pursuant to section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 4 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit a report to the Congress regarding the implementation of this section, together with the Administrator’s recommendations, if any, for modifications or improvement.

(c) STATE MATCH.—Funds reserved pursuant to this section shall not be considered to be a State match of a capitalization grant required pursuant to section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act or the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.).

SEC. 303. [33 U.S.C. 1263a] GRANTS TO ALASKA TO IMPROVE SANITATION IN RURAL AND NATIVE VILLAGES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency may make grants to the State of Alaska for the benefit of rural and Native villages in Alaska to pay the Federal share of the cost of—

(1) the development and construction of public water systems and wastewater systems to improve the health and sanitation conditions in the villages; and

(2) training, technical assistance, and educational programs relating to the operation and management of sanitation services in rural and Native villages.

(b) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of the cost of the activities described in subsection (a) shall be 75 percent.

(c) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—The State of Alaska may use an amount not to exceed 4 percent of any grant made available under this subsection for administrative expenses necessary to carry out the activities described in subsection (a).

(d) CONSULTATION WITH THE STATE OF ALASKA.—The Administrator shall consult with the State of Alaska on a method of prioritizing the allocation of grants under subsection (a) according to the needs of, and relative health and sanitation conditions in, each eligible village.

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section—

- (1) \$40,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2024;
- (2) \$50,000,000 for fiscal year 2025; and
- (3) \$60,000,000 for fiscal year 2026.

SEC. 304. SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.

It is the sense of the Congress that appropriations for grants under section 128 (relating to New York City watershed), section 135 (relating to colonias), and section 307 (relating to Alaska Native villages) should not be provided if such appropriations would prevent the adequate capitalization of State revolving loan funds.

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SEC. 306. WASHINGTON AQUEDUCT.

【Section 306 was repealed by section 6 of P.L. 107–217 (116 Stat. 1062). P.L. 107–217 provided for the codification of title 40, United States Code.】
【40 U.S.C. 45 nt】

SEC. 307. WASTEWATER ASSISTANCE TO COLONIAS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section:

(1) BORDER STATE.—The term “border State” means Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas.

(2) COVERED ENTITY.—The term “covered entity” means each of the following:

(A) A border State.

(B) A local government with jurisdiction over an eligible community.

(3) ELIGIBLE COMMUNITY.—The term “eligible community” means a low-income community with economic hardship that—

(A) is commonly referred to as a colonia;

(B) is located along the United States-Mexico border (generally in an unincorporated area); and

(C) lacks basic sanitation facilities such as household plumbing or a proper sewage disposal system.

(4) TREATMENT WORKS.—The term “treatment works” has the meaning provided in section 212(2) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1292(2)).

(b) GRANTS FOR WASTEWATER ASSISTANCE.—The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and the heads of other appropriate Federal agencies are authorized to award grants to a covered entity to provide assistance to eligible communities for the planning, design, and construction or improvement of sewers, treatment works, and appropriate connections for wastewater treatment.

(c) USE OF FUNDS.—Each grant awarded pursuant to subsection (b) shall be used to provide assistance to one or more eligible communities with respect to which the residents are subject to a significant health risk (as determined by the Administrator or the head of the Federal agency making the grant) attributable to the lack of access to an adequate and affordable treatment works for wastewater.

(d) COST SHARING.—The amount of a grant awarded pursuant to this section may not be less than 80 percent of the costs of carrying out the project that is the subject of the grant.

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$100,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2023 through 2027.

【33 U.S.C. 1281 nt】

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TITLE IV—ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR WATER INFRASTRUCTURE AND WATERSHEDS

SEC. 401. [42 U.S.C. 300j-3c] NATIONAL PROGRAM.

(a) TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency may provide technical and financial assistance in the form of grants to States (1) for the construction, rehabilitation, and improvement of water supply systems, and (2) consistent with nonpoint source management programs established under section 319 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, for source water quality protection programs to address pollutants in navigable waters for the purpose of making such waters usable by water supply systems.

(b) LIMITATION.—Not more than 30 percent of the amounts appropriated to carry out this section in a fiscal year may be used for source water quality protection programs described in subsection (a)(2).

(c) CONDITION.—As a condition to receiving assistance under this section, a State shall ensure that such assistance is carried out in the most cost-effective manner, as determined by the State.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) UNCONDITIONAL AUTHORIZATION.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 1997 through 2003. Such sums shall remain available until expended.

(2) CONDITIONAL AUTHORIZATION.—In addition to amounts authorized under paragraph (1), there are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this title \$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 1997 through 2003, provided that such authorization shall be in effect for a fiscal year only if at least 75 percent of the total amount of funds authorized to be appropriated for such fiscal year by section 1452(m) of the Safe Drinking Water Act are appropriated.

(e) ACQUISITION OF LANDS.—Assistance provided with funds made available under this title may be used for the acquisition of lands and other interests in lands; however, nothing in this title authorizes the acquisition of lands or other interests in lands from other than willing sellers.

(f) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of the cost of activities for which grants are made under this title shall be 50 percent.

(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) STATE.—The term “State” means a State, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

(2) WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM.—The term “water supply system” means a system for the provision to the public of piped water for human consumption if such system has at least 15 service connections or regularly serves at least 25 individuals and a draw and fill system for the provision to the public of

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water for human consumption. Such term does not include a system owned by a Federal agency. Such term includes (A) any collection, treatment, storage, and distribution facilities under control of the operator of such system and used primarily in connection with such system, and (B) any collection or pretreatment facilities not under such control that are used primarily in connection with such system.

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