

under paragraph (1), the Administrator shall within 90 days of the date on which such application is submitted (A) make the determination applied for, or (B) deny the application and notify the applicant in writing of the reasons for his denial.

(c) Interim primary enforcement authority

A State that has primary enforcement authority under this section with respect to each existing national primary drinking water regulation shall be considered to have primary enforcement authority with respect to each new or revised national primary drinking water regulation during the period beginning on the effective date of a regulation adopted and submitted by the State with respect to the new or revised national primary drinking water regulation in accordance with subsection (b)(1) and ending at such time as the Administrator makes a determination under subsection (b)(2)(B) with respect to the regulation.

(July 1, 1944, ch. 373, title XIV, §1413, as added Pub. L. 93-523, §2(a), Dec. 16, 1974, 88 Stat. 1665; amended Pub. L. 99-339, title I, §101(c)(2), June 19, 1986, 100 Stat. 646; Pub. L. 104-182, title I, §§112, 113(b), Aug. 6, 1996, 110 Stat. 1633, 1635; Pub. L. 115-270, title II, §2010(b), Oct. 23, 2018, 132 Stat. 3848.)

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2018—Subsec. (a)(6), (7). Pub. L. 115-270, §2010(b)(1), added par. (6) and redesignated former par. (6) as (7).

Subsec. (b)(1). Pub. L. 115-270, §2010(b)(2), struck out “of paragraphs (1), (2), (3), and (4)” after “the requirements”.

1996—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 104-182, §112(a)(1), amended par. (1) generally. Prior to amendment, par. (1) read as follows: “has adopted drinking water regulations which are no less stringent than the national primary drinking water regulations in effect under sections 300g-1(a) and 300g-1(b) of this title;”.

Subsec. (a)(5). Pub. L. 104-182, §112(b), inserted “including earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, and other natural disasters, as appropriate” after “emergency circumstances”.

Subsec. (a)(6). Pub. L. 104-182, §113(b), added par. (6).

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 104-182, §112(a)(2), added subsec. (c).

1986—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 99-339 substituted “are no less stringent than the national primary drinking water regulations in effect under sections 300g-1(a) and 300g-1(b) of this title” for subpars. (A) and (B) which related to stringency of State drinking water regulations between period of promulgation and effective date of national interim drinking water regulations and during the period after such effective date.

§ 300g-3. Enforcement of drinking water regulations

(a) Notice to State and public water system; issuance of administrative order; civil action

(1)(A) Whenever the Administrator finds during a period during which a State has primary enforcement responsibility for public water systems (within the meaning of section 300g-2(a) of this title) that any public water system—

(i) for which a variance under section 300g-4 or an exemption under section 300g-5 of this title is not in effect, does not comply with any applicable requirement, or

(ii) for which a variance under section 300g-4 or an exemption under section 300g-5 of this title is in effect, does not comply with any schedule or other requirement imposed pursuant thereto,

he shall so notify the State and such public water system and provide such advice and technical assistance to such State and public water system as may be appropriate to bring the system into compliance with the requirement by the earliest feasible time.

(B) If, beyond the thirtieth day after the Administrator’s notification under subparagraph (A), the State has not commenced appropriate enforcement action, the Administrator shall issue an order under subsection (g) requiring the public water system to comply with such applicable requirement or the Administrator shall commence a civil action under subsection (b).

(2) ENFORCEMENT IN NONPRIMACY STATES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—If, on the basis of information available to the Administrator, the Administrator finds, with respect to a period in which a State does not have primary enforcement responsibility for public water systems, that a public water system in the State—

(i) for which a variance under section 300g-4 of this title or an exemption under section 300g-5 of this title is not in effect, does not comply with any applicable requirement; or

(ii) for which a variance under section 300g-4 of this title or an exemption under section 300g-5 of this title is in effect, does not comply with any schedule or other requirement imposed pursuant to the variance or exemption;

the Administrator shall issue an order under subsection (g) requiring the public water system to comply with the requirement, or commence a civil action under subsection (b).

(B) NOTICE.—If the Administrator takes any action pursuant to this paragraph, the Administrator shall notify an appropriate local elected official, if any, with jurisdiction over the public water system of the action prior to the time that the action is taken.

(b) Judicial determinations in appropriate Federal district courts; civil penalties, separate violations

The Administrator may bring a civil action in the appropriate United States district court to require compliance with any applicable requirement, with an order issued under subsection (g), or with any schedule or other requirement imposed pursuant to a variance or exemption granted under section 300g-4 or 300g-5 of this title if—

(1) authorized under paragraph (1) or (2) of subsection (a), or

(2) if requested by (A) the chief executive officer of the State in which is located the public water system which is not in compliance with such regulation or requirement, or (B) the agency of such State which has jurisdiction over compliance by public water systems in the State with national primary drinking water regulations or State drinking water regulations.

The court may enter, in an action brought under this subsection, such judgement as protection of public health may require, taking into consideration the time necessary to comply and the availability of alternative water supplies; and, if the court determines that there has been a violation of the regulation or schedule or other requirement with respect to which the action was brought, the court may, taking into account the seriousness of the violation, the population at risk, and other appropriate factors, impose on the violator a civil penalty of not to exceed \$25,000 for each day in which such violation occurs.

(c) Notice to States, the Administrator, and persons served

(1) In general

Each owner or operator of a public water system shall give notice of each of the following to the persons served by the system:

(A) Notice of any failure on the part of the public water system to—

(i) comply with an applicable maximum contaminant level or treatment technique requirement of, or a testing procedure prescribed by, a national primary drinking water regulation; or

(ii) perform monitoring required by section 300j-4(a) of this title.

(B) If the public water system is subject to a variance granted under subsection (a)(1)(A), (a)(2), or (e) of section 300g-4 of this title for an inability to meet a maximum contaminant level requirement or is subject to an exemption granted under section 300g-5 of this title, notice of—

(i) the existence of the variance or exemption; and

(ii) any failure to comply with the requirements of any schedule prescribed pursuant to the variance or exemption.

(C) Notice of the concentration level of any unregulated contaminant for which the Administrator has required public notice pursuant to paragraph (2)(F).

(D) Notice that the public water system exceeded the lead action level under section 141.80(c) of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (or a prescribed level of lead that the Administrator establishes for public education or notification in a successor regulation promulgated pursuant to section 300g-1 of this title).

(2) Form, manner, and frequency of notice

(A) In general

The Administrator shall, by regulation, and after consultation with the States, prescribe the manner, frequency, form, and content for giving notice under this subsection. The regulations shall—

(i) provide for different frequencies of notice based on the differences between violations that are intermittent or infrequent and violations that are continuous or frequent; and

(ii) take into account the seriousness of any potential adverse health effects that may be involved.

(B) State requirements

(i) In general

A State may, by rule, establish alternative notification requirements—

(I) with respect to the form and content of notice given under and in a manner in accordance with subparagraph (C); and

(II) with respect to the form and content of notice given under subparagraph (E).

(ii) Contents

The alternative requirements shall provide the same type and amount of information as required pursuant to this subsection and regulations issued under subparagraph (A).

(iii) Relationship to section 300g-2

Nothing in this subparagraph shall be construed or applied to modify the requirements of section 300g-2 of this title.

(C) Notice of violations or exceedances with potential to have serious adverse effects on human health

Regulations issued under subparagraph (A) shall specify notification procedures for each violation, and each exceedance described in paragraph (1)(D), by a public water system that has the potential to have serious adverse effects on human health as a result of short-term exposure. Each notice of violation or exceedance provided under this subparagraph shall—

(i) be distributed as soon as practicable, but not later than 24 hours, after the public water system learns of the violation or exceedance;

(ii) provide a clear and readily understandable explanation of—

(I) the violation or exceedance;

(II) the potential adverse effects on human health;

(III) the steps that the public water system is taking to correct the violation or exceedance; and

(IV) the necessity of seeking alternative water supplies until the violation or exceedance is corrected;

(iii) be provided to the Administrator and the head of the State agency that has primary enforcement responsibility under section 300g-2 of this title, as applicable, as soon as practicable, but not later than 24 hours after the public water system learns of the violation or exceedance; and

(iv) as required by the State agency in general regulations of the State agency, or on a case-by-case basis after the consultation referred to in clause (iii), considering the health risks involved—

(I) be provided to appropriate media, including broadcast media;

(II) be prominently published in a newspaper of general circulation serving the area not later than 1 day after distribution of a notice pursuant to clause (i) or the date of publication of the next issue of the newspaper; or

(III) be provided by posting or door-to-door notification.

(D) Notice by the Administrator

If the State with primary enforcement responsibility or the owner or operator of a public water system has not issued a notice under subparagraph (C) for an exceedance of the lead action level under section 141.80(c) of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (or a prescribed level of lead that the Administrator establishes for public education or notification in a successor regulation promulgated pursuant to section 300g-1 of this title) that has the potential to have serious adverse effects on human health as a result of short-term exposure, not later than 24 hours after the Administrator is notified of the exceedance, the Administrator shall issue the required notice under that subparagraph.

(E) Written notice

(i) In general

Regulations issued under subparagraph (A) shall specify notification procedures for violations other than the violations covered by subparagraph (C). The procedures shall specify that a public water system shall provide written notice to each person served by the system by notice (I) in the first bill (if any) prepared after the date of occurrence of the violation, (II) in an annual report issued not later than 1 year after the date of occurrence of the violation, or (III) by mail or direct delivery as soon as practicable, but not later than 1 year after the date of occurrence of the violation.

(ii) Form and manner of notice

The Administrator shall prescribe the form and manner of the notice to provide a clear and readily understandable explanation of the violation, any potential adverse health effects, and the steps that the system is taking to seek alternative water supplies, if any, until the violation is corrected.

(F) Unregulated contaminants

The Administrator may require the owner or operator of a public water system to give notice to the persons served by the system of the concentration levels of an unregulated contaminant required to be monitored under section 300j-4(a) of this title.

(3) Reports

(A) Annual report by State

(i) In general

Not later than January 1, 1998, and annually thereafter, each State that has primary enforcement responsibility under section 300g-2 of this title shall prepare, make readily available to the public, and submit to the Administrator an annual report on violations of national primary drinking water regulations by public water systems in the State, including violations with respect to (I) maximum contaminant levels, (II) treatment requirements, (III) variances and exemptions, and (IV) moni-

toring requirements determined to be significant by the Administrator after consultation with the States.

(ii) Distribution

The State shall publish and distribute summaries of the report and indicate where the full report is available for review.

(B) Annual report by Administrator

Not later than July 1, 1998, and annually thereafter, the Administrator shall prepare and make available to the public an annual report summarizing and evaluating reports submitted by States pursuant to subparagraph (A), notices submitted by public water systems serving Indian Tribes provided to the Administrator pursuant to subparagraph (C) or (E) of paragraph (2), and notices issued by the Administrator with respect to public water systems serving Indian Tribes under subparagraph (D) of that paragraph and making recommendations concerning the resources needed to improve compliance with this subchapter. The report shall include information about public water system compliance on Indian reservations and about enforcement activities undertaken and financial assistance provided by the Administrator on Indian reservations, and shall make specific recommendations concerning the resources needed to improve compliance with this subchapter on Indian reservations.

(4) Consumer confidence reports by community water systems

(A) Reports to consumers

The Administrator, in consultation with public water systems, environmental groups, public interest groups, risk communication experts, and the States, and other interested parties, shall issue regulations within 24 months after August 6, 1996, to require each community water system to mail, or provide by electronic means, to each customer of the system at least once annually a report on the level of contaminants in the drinking water purveyed by that system (referred to in this paragraph as a "consumer confidence report"). Such regulations shall provide a brief and plainly worded definition of the terms "maximum contaminant level goal", "maximum contaminant level", "variances", and "exemptions" and brief statements in plain language regarding the health concerns that resulted in regulation of each regulated contaminant. The regulations shall also include a brief and plainly worded explanation regarding contaminants that may reasonably be expected to be present in drinking water, including bottled water. The regulations shall also provide for an Environmental Protection Agency toll-free hotline that consumers can call for more information and explanation.

(B) Contents of report

The consumer confidence reports under this paragraph shall include, but not be limited to, each of the following:

(i) Information on the source of the water purveyed.

(ii) A brief and plainly worded definition of the terms “action level”, “maximum contaminant level goal”, “maximum contaminant level”, “variances”, and “exemptions” as provided in the regulations of the Administrator.

(iii) If any regulated contaminant is detected in the water purveyed by the public water system, a statement describing, as applicable—

(I) the maximum contaminant level goal;

(II) the maximum contaminant level;

(III) the level of the contaminant in the water system;

(IV) the action level for the contaminant; and

(V) for any contaminant for which there has been a violation of the maximum contaminant level during the year concerned, a brief statement in plain language regarding the health concerns that resulted in regulation of the contaminant, as provided by the Administrator in regulations under subparagraph (A).

(iv) Information on compliance with national primary drinking water regulations, as required by the Administrator, including corrosion control efforts, and notice if the system is operating under a variance or exemption and the basis on which the variance or exemption was granted.

(v) Information on the levels of unregulated contaminants for which monitoring is required under section 300j-4(a)(2) of this title (including levels of cryptosporidium and radon where States determine they may be found).

(vi) A statement that the presence of contaminants in drinking water does not necessarily indicate that the drinking water poses a health risk and that more information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency hotline.

(vii) Identification of, if any—

(I) exceedances described in paragraph (1)(D) for which corrective action has been required by the Administrator or the State (in the case of a State exercising primary enforcement responsibility for public water systems) during the monitoring period covered by the consumer confidence report; and

(II) violations that occurred during the monitoring period covered by the consumer confidence report.

A public water system may include such additional information as it deems appropriate for public education. The Administrator may, for not more than 3 regulated contaminants other than those referred to in clause (iii)(V), require a consumer confidence report under this paragraph to include the brief statement in plain language regarding the health concerns that resulted in regulation of the contaminant or contaminants concerned, as provided by the Administrator in regulations under subparagraph (A).

(C) Coverage

The Governor of a State may determine not to apply the mailing requirement of subparagraph (A) to a community water system serving fewer than 10,000 persons. Any such system shall—

(i) inform, in the newspaper notice required by clause (iii) or by other means, its customers that the system will not be mailing the report as required by subparagraph (A);

(ii) make the consumer confidence report available upon request to the public; and

(iii) publish the report referred to in subparagraph (A) annually in one or more local newspapers serving the area in which customers of the system are located.

(D) Alternative to publication

For any community water system which, pursuant to subparagraph (C), is not required to meet the mailing requirement of subparagraph (A) and which serves 500 persons or fewer, the community water system may elect not to comply with clause (i) or (iii) of subparagraph (C). If the community water system so elects, the system shall, at a minimum—

(i) prepare an annual consumer confidence report pursuant to subparagraph (B); and

(ii) provide notice at least once per year to each of its customers by mail, by door-to-door delivery, by posting or by other means authorized by the regulations of the Administrator that the consumer confidence report is available upon request.

(E) Alternative form and content

A State exercising primary enforcement responsibility may establish, by rule, after notice and public comment, alternative requirements with respect to the form and content of consumer confidence reports under this paragraph.

(F) Revisions

(i) Understandability and frequency

Not later than 24 months after October 23, 2018, the Administrator, in consultation with the parties identified in subparagraph (A), shall issue revisions to the regulations issued under subparagraph (A)—

(I) to increase—

(aa) the readability, clarity, and understandability of the information presented in consumer confidence reports; and

(bb) the accuracy of information presented, and risk communication, in consumer confidence reports; and

(II) with respect to community water systems that serve 10,000 or more persons, to require each such community water system to provide, by mail, electronic means, or other methods described in clause (ii), a consumer confidence report to each customer of the system at least biannually.

(ii) Electronic delivery

Any revision of regulations pursuant to clause (i) shall allow delivery of consumer

confidence reports by methods consistent with methods described in the memorandum “Safe Drinking Water Act-Consumer Confidence Report Rule Delivery Options” issued by the Environmental Protection Agency on January 3, 2013.

(5) Exceedance of lead level at households

(A) Strategic plan

Not later than 180 days after December 16, 2016, the Administrator shall, in collaboration with owners and operators of public water systems and States, establish a strategic plan for how the Administrator, a State with primary enforcement responsibility, and owners and operators of public water systems shall provide targeted outreach, education, technical assistance, and risk communication to populations affected by the concentration of lead in a public water system, including dissemination of information described in subparagraph (C).

(B) EPA initiation of notice

(i) Forwarding of data by employee of the Agency

If the Agency develops, or receives from a source other than a State or a public water system, data that meets the requirements of section 300g-1(b)(3)(A)(ii) of this title that indicates that the drinking water of a household served by a public water system contains a level of lead that exceeds the lead action level under section 141.80(c) of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (or a prescribed level of lead that the Administrator establishes for public education or notification in a successor regulation promulgated pursuant to section 300g-1 of this title) (referred to in this paragraph as an “affected household”), the Administrator shall require an appropriate employee of the Agency to forward the data, and information on the sampling techniques used to obtain the data, to the owner or operator of the public water system and the State in which the affected household is located within a time period determined by the Administrator.

(ii) Dissemination of information by owner or operator

The owner or operator of a public water system shall disseminate to affected households the information described in subparagraph (C) within a time period established by the Administrator, if the owner or operator—

(I) receives data and information under clause (i); and

(II) has not, since the date of the test that developed the data, notified the affected households—

(aa) with respect to the concentration of lead in the drinking water of the affected households; and

(bb) that the concentration of lead in the drinking water of the affected households exceeds the lead action level under section 141.80(c) of title 40,

Code of Federal Regulations (or a prescribed level of lead that the Administrator establishes for public education or notification in a successor regulation promulgated pursuant to section 300g-1 of this title).

(iii) Consultation

(I) Deadline

If the owner or operator of the public water system does not disseminate to the affected households the information described in subparagraph (C) as required under clause (ii) within the time period established by the Administrator, not later than 24 hours after the Administrator becomes aware of the failure by the owner or operator of the public water system to disseminate the information, the Administrator shall consult, within a period not to exceed 24 hours, with the applicable Governor to develop a plan, in accordance with the strategic plan, to disseminate the information to the affected households not later than 24 hours after the end of the consultation period.

(II) Delegation

The Administrator may only delegate the duty to consult under subclause (I) to an employee of the Agency who, as of the date of the delegation, works in the Office of Water at the headquarters of the Agency.

(iv) Dissemination by Administrator

The Administrator shall, as soon as practicable, disseminate to affected households the information described in subparagraph (C) if—

(I) the owner or operator of the public water system does not disseminate the information to the affected households within the time period determined by the Administrator, as required by clause (ii); and

(II)(aa) the Administrator and the applicable Governor do not agree on a plan described in clause (iii)(I) during the consultation period under that clause; or

(bb) the applicable Governor does not disseminate the information within 24 hours after the end of the consultation period.

(C) Information required

The information described in this subparagraph includes—

(i) a clear explanation of the potential adverse effects on human health of drinking water that contains a concentration of lead that exceeds the lead action level under section 141.80(c) of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (or a prescribed level of lead that the Administrator establishes for public education or notification in a successor regulation promulgated pursuant to section 300g-1 of this title);

(ii) the steps that the owner or operator of the public water system is taking to mitigate the concentration of lead; and

(iii) the necessity of seeking alternative water supplies until the date on which the concentration of lead is mitigated.

(6) Privacy

Any notice to the public or an affected household under this subsection shall protect the privacy of individual customer information.

(d) Notice of noncompliance with secondary drinking water regulations

Whenever, on the basis of information available to him, the Administrator finds that within a reasonable time after national secondary drinking water regulations have been promulgated, one or more public water systems in a State do not comply with such secondary regulations, and that such noncompliance appears to result from a failure of such State to take reasonable action to assure that public water systems throughout such State meet such secondary regulations, he shall so notify the State.

(e) State authority to adopt or enforce laws or regulations respecting drinking water regulations or public water systems unaffected

Nothing in this subchapter shall diminish any authority of a State or political subdivision to adopt or enforce any law or regulation respecting drinking water regulations or public water systems, but no such law or regulation shall relieve any person of any requirement otherwise applicable under this subchapter.

(f) Notice and public hearing; availability of recommendations transmitted to State and public water system

If the Administrator makes a finding of noncompliance (described in subparagraph (A) or (B) of subsection (a)(1)) with respect to a public water system in a State which has primary enforcement responsibility, the Administrator may, for the purpose of assisting that State in carrying out such responsibility and upon the petition of such State or public water system or persons served by such system, hold, after appropriate notice, public hearings for the purpose of gathering information from technical or other experts, Federal, State, or other public officials, representatives of such public water system, persons served by such system, and other interested persons on—

(1) the ways in which such system can within the earliest feasible time be brought into compliance with the regulation or requirement with respect to which such finding was made, and

(2) the means for the maximum feasible protection of the public health during any period in which such system is not in compliance with a national primary drinking water regulation or requirement applicable to a variance or exemption.

On the basis of such hearings the Administrator shall issue recommendations which shall be sent to such State and public water system and shall be made available to the public and communications media.

(g) Administrative order requiring compliance; notice and hearing; civil penalty; civil actions

(1) In any case in which the Administrator is authorized to bring a civil action under this section or under section 300j-4 of this title with re-

spect to any applicable requirement, the Administrator also may issue an order to require compliance with such applicable requirement.

(2) An order issued under this subsection shall not take effect, in the case of a State having primary enforcement responsibility for public water systems in that State, until after the Administrator has provided the State with an opportunity to confer with the Administrator regarding the order. A copy of any order issued under this subsection shall be sent to the appropriate State agency of the State involved if the State has primary enforcement responsibility for public water systems in that State. Any order issued under this subsection shall state with reasonable specificity the nature of the violation. In any case in which an order under this subsection is issued to a corporation, a copy of such order shall be issued to appropriate corporate officers.

(3)(A) Any person who violates, or fails or refuses to comply with, an order under this subsection shall be liable to the United States for a civil penalty of not more than \$25,000 per day of violation.

(B) In a case in which a civil penalty sought by the Administrator under this paragraph does not exceed \$5,000, the penalty shall be assessed by the Administrator after notice and opportunity for a public hearing (unless the person against whom the penalty is assessed requests a hearing on the record in accordance with section 554 of title 5). In a case in which a civil penalty sought by the Administrator under this paragraph exceeds \$5,000, but does not exceed \$25,000, the penalty shall be assessed by the Administrator after notice and opportunity for a hearing on the record in accordance with section 554 of title 5.

(C) Whenever any civil penalty sought by the Administrator under this subsection for a violation of an applicable requirement exceeds \$25,000, the penalty shall be assessed by a civil action brought by the Administrator in the appropriate United States district court (as determined under the provisions of title 28).

(D) If any person fails to pay an assessment of a civil penalty after it has become a final and unappealable order, or after the appropriate court of appeals has entered final judgment in favor of the Administrator, the Attorney General shall recover the amount for which such person is liable in any appropriate district court of the United States. In any such action, the validity and appropriateness of the final order imposing the civil penalty shall not be subject to review.

(h) Consolidation incentive**(1) In general**

An owner or operator of a public water system may submit to the State in which the system is located (if the State has primary enforcement responsibility under section 300g-2 of this title) or to the Administrator (if the State does not have primary enforcement responsibility) a plan (including specific measures and schedules) for—

(A) the physical consolidation of the system with 1 or more other systems;

(B) the consolidation of significant management and administrative functions of the system with 1 or more other systems;

(C) the transfer of ownership of the system that may reasonably be expected to improve drinking water quality; or

(D) entering into a contractual agreement for significant management or administrative functions of the system to correct violations identified in the plan.

(2) Consequences of approval

If the State or the Administrator approves a plan pursuant to paragraph (1), no enforcement action shall be taken pursuant to this part with respect to a specific violation identified in the approved plan prior to the date that is the earlier of the date on which consolidation is completed according to the plan or the date that is 2 years after the plan is approved.

(3) Authority for mandatory assessment

(A) Authority

A State with primary enforcement responsibility or the Administrator (if the State does not have primary enforcement responsibility) may require the owner or operator of a public water system to assess options for consolidation, or transfer of ownership of the system, as described in paragraph (1), or other actions expected to achieve compliance with national primary drinking water regulations described in clause (i)(I), if—

(i) the public water system—

(I) has repeatedly violated one or more national primary drinking water regulations and such repeated violations are likely to adversely affect human health; and

(II)(aa) is unable or unwilling to take feasible and affordable actions, as determined by the State with primary enforcement responsibility or the Administrator (if the State does not have primary enforcement responsibility), that will result in the public water system complying with the national primary drinking water regulations described in subclause (I), including accessing technical assistance and financial assistance through the State loan fund pursuant to section 300j-12 of this title; or

(bb) has already undertaken actions described in item (aa) without achieving compliance;

(ii) such consolidation, transfer, or other action is feasible; and

(iii) such consolidation, transfer, or other action could result in greater compliance with national primary drinking water regulations.

(B) Tailoring of assessments

Requirements for any assessment to be conducted pursuant to subparagraph (A) shall be tailored with respect to the size, type, and characteristics, of the public water system to be assessed.

(C) Approved entities

An assessment conducted pursuant to subparagraph (A) may be conducted by an entity approved by the State requiring such assessment (or the Administrator, if the State does not have primary enforcement responsibility),

which may include such State (or the Administrator, as applicable), the public water system, or a third party.

(D) Burden of assessments

It is the sense of Congress that any assessment required pursuant to subparagraph (A) should not be overly burdensome on the public water system that is assessed.

(4) Financial assistance

Notwithstanding section 300j-12(a)(3) of this title, a public water system undertaking consolidation or transfer of ownership or other actions pursuant to an assessment completed under paragraph (3) may receive a loan described in section 300j-12(a)(2)(A) of this title to carry out such consolidation, transfer, or other action.

(5) Protection of nonresponsible system

(A) Identification of liabilities

(i) In general

An owner or operator of a public water system that submits a plan pursuant to paragraph (1) based on an assessment conducted with respect to such public water system under paragraph (3) shall identify as part of such plan—

(I) any potential and existing liability for penalties and damages arising from each specific violation identified in the plan of which the owner or operator is aware; and

(II) any funds or other assets that are available to satisfy such liability, as of the date of submission of such plan, to the public water system that committed such violation.

(ii) Inclusion

In carrying out clause (i), the owner or operator shall take reasonable steps to ensure that all potential and existing liabilities for penalties and damages arising from each specific violation identified in the plan are identified.

(B) Reservation of funds

A public water system that, consistent with the findings of an assessment conducted pursuant to paragraph (3), has completed the actions under a plan submitted and approved pursuant to this subsection shall not be liable under this subchapter for a violation of this subchapter identified in the plan, except to the extent to which funds or other assets are identified pursuant to subparagraph (A)(i)(II) as available to satisfy such liability.

(6) Regulations

Not later than 2 years after October 23, 2018, the Administrator shall promulgate regulations to implement paragraphs (3), (4), and (5).

(i) “Applicable requirement” defined

In this section, the term “applicable requirement” means—

(1) a requirement of section 300g-1, 300g-3, 300g-4, 300g-5, 300g-6, 300i-2, 300j, or 300j-4 of this title;

(2) a regulation promulgated pursuant to a section referred to in paragraph (1);

(3) a schedule or requirement imposed pursuant to a section referred to in paragraph (1); and

(4) a requirement of, or permit issued under, an applicable State program for which the Administrator has made a determination that the requirements of section 300g-2 of this title have been satisfied, or an applicable State program approved pursuant to this part.

(j) Improved accuracy and availability of compliance monitoring data

(1) Strategic plan

Not later than 1 year after October 23, 2018, the Administrator, in coordination with States (including States without primary enforcement responsibility under section 300g-2 of this title), public water systems, and other interested stakeholders, shall develop and provide to Congress a strategic plan for improving the accuracy and availability of monitoring data collected to demonstrate compliance with national primary drinking water regulations and submitted—

- (A) by public water systems to States; or
- (B) by States to the Administrator.

(2) Evaluation

In developing the strategic plan under paragraph (1), the Administrator shall evaluate any challenges faced—

- (A) in ensuring the accuracy and integrity of submitted data described in paragraph (1);
- (B) by States and public water systems in implementing an electronic system for submitting such data, including the technical and economic feasibility of implementing such a system; and
- (C) by users of such electronic systems in being able to access such data.

(3) Findings and recommendations

The Administrator shall include in the strategic plan provided to Congress under paragraph (1)—

- (A) a summary of the findings of the evaluation under paragraph (2); and
- (B) recommendations on practicable, cost-effective methods and means that can be employed to improve the accuracy and availability of submitted data described in paragraph (1).

(4) Consultation

In developing the strategic plan under paragraph (1), the Administrator may, as appropriate, consult with States or other Federal agencies that have experience using practicable methods and means to improve the accuracy and availability of submitted data described in such paragraph.

(July 1, 1944, ch. 373, title XIV, §1414, as added Pub. L. 93-523, §2(a), Dec. 16, 1974, 88 Stat. 1666; amended Pub. L. 95-190, §12(b), Nov. 16, 1977, 91 Stat. 1398; Pub. L. 99-339, title I, §§102, 103, June 19, 1986, 100 Stat. 647, 648; Pub. L. 104-182, title I, §§113(a), 114(a), Aug. 6, 1996, 110 Stat. 1634, 1636; Pub. L. 107-188, title IV, §403(1), June 12, 2002, 116 Stat. 687; Pub. L. 114-322, title II, §2106(a), Dec. 16, 2016, 130 Stat. 1722; Pub. L. 115-270, title II, §§2008-2010(a), 2011, Oct. 23, 2018, 132 Stat. 3846, 3847, 3849.)

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2018—Subsec. (c)(4)(A). Pub. L. 115-270, §2008(1), (2), substituted “Reports” for “Annual reports” in heading and inserted “, or provide by electronic means,” after “to mail” in text.

Subsec. (c)(4)(B)(iv). Pub. L. 115-270, §2008(3)(A), substituted “the Administrator, including corrosion control efforts, and” for “the Administrator, and”.

Subsec. (c)(4)(B)(vii). Pub. L. 115-270, §2008(3)(B), which directed amendment of subpar. (B) by adding cl. (vii) at the end, was executed by adding cl. (vii) after cl. (vi) and before concluding provisions, to reflect the probable intent of Congress.

Subsec. (c)(4)(F). Pub. L. 115-270, §2008(4), added subpar. (F).

Subsec. (h)(1)(D). Pub. L. 115-270, §2009(a), added subpar. (D).

Subsec. (h)(3) to (6). Pub. L. 115-270, §2010(a), added pars. (3) to (6).

Subsec. (i)(1). Pub. L. 115-270, §2009(b), inserted a comma after “300g-6”.

Subsec. (j). Pub. L. 115-270, §2011, added subsec. (j).

2016—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 114-322, §2106(a)(1), substituted “Notice to States, the Administrator, and” for “Notice to” in heading.

Subsec. (c)(1)(C). Pub. L. 114-322, §2106(a)(2)(A), substituted “paragraph (2)(F)” for “paragraph (2)(E)”.

Subsec. (c)(1)(D). Pub. L. 114-322, §2106(a)(2)(B), added subpar. (D).

Subsec. (c)(2)(B)(i)(II). Pub. L. 114-322, §2106(a)(3)(A), substituted “subparagraph (E)” for “subparagraph (D)”.

Subsec. (c)(2)(C). Pub. L. 114-322, §2106(a)(3)(B)(i), (ii), substituted, in heading, “Notice of violations or exceedances” for “Violations” and, in introductory provisions, “each violation, and each exceedance described in paragraph (1)(D),” for “each violation” and “notice of violation or exceedance” for “notice of violation”.

Subsec. (c)(2)(C)(i). Pub. L. 114-322, §2106(a)(3)(B)(iii), added cl. (i) and struck out former cl. (i) which read as follows: “be distributed as soon as practicable after the occurrence of the violation, but not later than 24 hours after the occurrence of the violation;”.

Subsec. (c)(2)(C)(ii). Pub. L. 114-322, §2106(a)(3)(B)(iv), inserted “or exceedance” after “violation” wherever appearing.

Subsec. (c)(2)(C)(iii). Pub. L. 114-322, §2106(a)(3)(B)(v), added cl. (iii) and struck out former cl. (iii) which read as follows: “be provided to the Administrator or the head of the State agency that has primary enforcement responsibility under section 300g-2 of this title as soon as practicable, but not later than 24 hours after the occurrence of the violation; and”.

Subsec. (c)(2)(C)(iv)(I). Pub. L. 114-322, §2106(a)(3)(B)(vi)(I), substituted “media, including broadcast media” for “broadcast media”.

Subsec. (c)(2)(C)(iv)(III). Pub. L. 114-322, §2106(a)(3)(B)(vi)(II), struck out “in lieu of notification by means of broadcast media or newspaper” after “notification”.

Subsec. (c)(2)(D) to (F). Pub. L. 114-322, §2106(a)(3)(C), (D), added subpar. (D) and redesignated former subpars. (D) and (E) as (E) and (F), respectively.

Subsec. (c)(3)(B). Pub. L. 114-322, §2106(a)(4), substituted “subparagraph (A),” for “subparagraph (A) and” and “subparagraph (C) or (E) of paragraph (2), and notices issued by the Administrator with respect to public water systems serving Indian Tribes under subparagraph (D) of that paragraph” for “subparagraph (C) or (D) of paragraph (2)”.

Subsec. (c)(4)(B). Pub. L. 114-322, §2106(a)(5)(C), substituted “clause (iii)(V)” for “subclause (IV) of clause (iii)” in concluding provisions.

Subsec. (c)(4)(B)(ii). Pub. L. 114-322, §2106(a)(5)(A), substituted “the terms ‘action level,’” for “the terms”.

Subsec. (c)(4)(B)(iii). Pub. L. 114-322, §2106(a)(5)(B), added cl. (iii) and struck out former cl. (iii) which read

as follows: “If any regulated contaminant is detected in the water purveyed by the public water system, a statement setting forth (I) the maximum contaminant level goal, (II) the maximum contaminant level, (III) the level of such contaminant in such water system, and (IV) for any regulated contaminant for which there has been a violation of the maximum contaminant level during the year concerned, the brief statement in plain language regarding the health concerns that resulted in regulation of such contaminant, as provided by the Administrator in regulations under subparagraph (A).”

Subsec. (c)(5), (6). Pub. L. 114-322, §2106(a)(6), added pars. (5) and (6).

2002—Subsec. (i)(1). Pub. L. 107-188 inserted “300i-2” after “300g-6”.

1996—Subsec. (a)(1)(A). Pub. L. 104-182, §113(a)(1)(A)(i)(II), substituted “with the requirement” for “with such regulation or requirement” in concluding provisions.

Subsec. (a)(1)(A)(i). Pub. L. 104-182, §113(a)(1)(A)(i)(I), substituted “any applicable requirement” for “any national primary drinking water regulation in effect under section 300g-1 of this title”.

Subsec. (a)(1)(B). Pub. L. 104-182, §113(a)(1)(A)(ii), substituted “such applicable requirement” for “such regulation or requirement”.

Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 104-182, §113(a)(1)(B), added par. (2) and struck out former par. (2) which read as follows: “Whenever, on the basis of information available to him, the Administrator finds during a period during which a State does not have primary enforcement responsibility for public water systems that a public water system in such State—

“(A) for which a variance under section 300g-4(a)(2) or an exemption under section 300g-5(f) of this title is not in effect, does not comply with any national primary drinking water regulation in effect under section 300g-1 of this title, or

“(B) for which a variance under section 300g-4(a)(2) or an exemption under section 300g-5(f) of this title is in effect, does not comply with any schedule or other requirement imposed pursuant thereto,

the Administrator shall issue an order under subsection (g) of this section requiring the public water system to comply with such regulation or requirement or the Administrator shall commence a civil action under subsection (b) of this section.”

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 104-182, §113(a)(2), substituted “any applicable requirement” for “a national primary drinking water regulation” in introductory provisions.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 104-182, §114(a), amended subsec. (c) generally. Prior to amendment, subsec. (c) related to notice of owner or operator of public water system to persons served, regulations for form, manner, and frequency of notice, amendment of regulations to provide different types and frequencies of notice, and penalties.

Subsec. (g)(1). Pub. L. 104-182, §113(a)(3)(A), substituted “applicable requirement” for “regulation, schedule, or other requirement” in two places.

Subsec. (g)(2). Pub. L. 104-182, §113(a)(3)(B), substituted “effect, in the case” for “effect until after notice and opportunity for public hearing and, in the case” and “regarding the order” for “regarding the proposed order” and struck out “proposed to be” after “A copy of any order”.

Subsec. (g)(3)(B). Pub. L. 104-182, §113(a)(3)(C)(i), added subpar. (B) and struck out former subpar. (B) which read as follows: “Whenever any civil penalty sought by the Administrator under this paragraph does not exceed a total of \$5,000, the penalty shall be assessed by the Administrator after notice and opportunity for a hearing on the record in accordance with section 554 of title 5.”

Subsec. (g)(3)(C). Pub. L. 104-182, §113(a)(3)(C)(ii), substituted “subsection for a violation of an applicable requirement exceeds \$25,000” for “paragraph exceeds \$5,000”.

Subsecs. (h), (i). Pub. L. 104-182, §113(a)(4), added subsecs. (h) and (i).

1986—Pub. L. 99-339, §102(d)(2), substituted “Enforcement” for “Failure of State to assure enforcement” in section catchline.

Subsec. (a)(1)(A). Pub. L. 99-339, §102(a), inserted “and such public water system” after “notify the State” in provisions following cl. (ii).

Subsec. (a)(1)(B). Pub. L. 99-339, §102(b)(1), amended subpar. (B) generally, substituting provisions which relate to issuance of an order to public water system to comply with regulations, or commencement of civil action if the State has not commenced appropriate enforcement action for provisions which related to public notice of noncompliance and commencement of civil action by Administrator if State failed to take steps to obtain compliance by public water system.

Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 99-339, §102(b)(2), substituted “the Administrator shall issue an order under subsection (g) of this section requiring the public water system to comply with such regulation or requirement or the Administrator shall commence a civil action under subsection (b) of this section” for “he may commence a civil action under subsection (b) of this section”.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 99-339, §102(c), inserted “, with an order issued under subsection (g),” before “or with any schedule” and substituted “there has been a violation” for “there has been a willful violation” and “\$25,000” for “\$5,000”.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 99-339, §103, substituted provisions relating to amendment of regulations within fifteen months after June 19, 1986, to provide different types and frequencies of notice based on the differences between violations which are intermittent or continuous, manner and content of notices, notice required to public served by owner or operator of public water system, and civil penalty of \$25,000, for provisions relating to form, manner, and frequency of notice based on three month billing period for water bills, notice required to public served by owner or operator of public water system, and civil penalty of \$5,000.

Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 99-339, §102(d), added subsec. (g). 1977—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 95-190 inserted provisions relating to frequency of required notice, and notice respecting contaminant levels, and substituted “issued under this subsection” for “thereunder”.

§ 300g-4. Variances

- (a) **Characteristics of raw water sources; specific treatment technique; notice to Administrator, reasons for variance; compliance, enforcement; approval or revision of schedules and revocation of variances; review of variances and schedules; publication in Federal Register, notice and results of review; notice to State; considerations respecting abuse of discretion in granting variances or failing to prescribe schedules; State corrective action; authority of Administrator in a State without primary enforcement responsibility; alternative treatment techniques**

Notwithstanding any other provision of this part, variances from national primary drinking water regulations may be granted as follows:

- (1)(A) A State which has primary enforcement responsibility for public water systems may grant one or more variances from an applicable national primary drinking water regulation to one or more public water systems within its jurisdiction which, because of characteristics of the raw water sources which are reasonably available to the systems, cannot meet the requirements respecting the maximum contaminant levels of such drinking water regulation. A variance may be issued to a system on condition that the system install