

Small Systems Working Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

National Drinking Water Advisory Council

March 20 & 21, 1997

Channel Inn, Washington, D.C.

The NDWAC Small Systems Working Group reaffirmed its consensus decisions to recommend to the full NDWAC that EPA produce six specific work products related to capacity development and affordability; and to recommend specific first draft language for these products:

1. Guidance for States on Ensuring the Technical, Financial, and Managerial Capacity of New Community Water Systems and New Non-Transient, Non-Community Water Systems.
The working group has agreed that the guidance should require States to identify, from an extensive menu of options,: 1) the legal authority or other means they intend to use as the basis of their efforts; 2) the points in the new system development process at which the legal authorities or other means will be utilized; 3) the specific mechanisms to ensure system capacity that will be applied at each identified point; and 4) the means that the State will use to assess success.
2. Guidance for States on Preparation of Capacity Development Strategies (What States need to do to avoid the SRF withholding).
The working group has agreed that the guidance should require: that the States certify that they have proactively solicited public comment; that the States briefly describe all significant public comments received and the State response to them; that the State describe the issues they considered relative to 1420(c)(2)(A-E) and explain why items were included or excluded from the strategy; that the State briefly describe how the strategy fits together as a strategy to assist PWS's in acquiring and maintaining capacity; that the State describe the method they will use to establish a baseline and measure improvement in capacity; and that the State describe how it is implementing the strategy.
3. Information for States on options they can consider in developing their Capacity Development Strategies.
4. Information for States on how they could assess the technical, financial, and managerial capacity of systems seeking SRF assistance.
5. Information for the public to better enable them to participate with States in the development of State Capacity Development Strategies.
6. Information for States to assist them in developing affordability criteria.

The working group has had detailed discussions regarding and has reached substantial conceptual consensus on items 1, 2, and 6. EPA contractors will be developing preliminary first drafts, based upon the working groups discussions thus far, for the group to discuss at their next meeting on April 28-29, 1997. The group has also engaged in substantial brainstorming regarding items 3, 4, and 5. At the group's request, EPA contractor's will develop preliminary discussion drafts of items 3, 4, and 5 based upon the brainstorming results. These preliminary discussion drafts will be considered by the group at their April meeting.

The Small Systems Working Group plans to have complete recommended first draft language for items 1 through 6 ready by mid-July so that the full NDWAC can consider it during their scheduled teleconference on August 27, 1997.

The working group also discussed, but did not reach consensus on, two additional issues:

- (A) National level affordability criteria for EPA to use in listing affordable technology for small systems.
- (B) Guidance for States on specific considerations in assessing system technical, financial, and managerial capacity for purposes of SRF assistance.

The group has asked that EPA contractors develop some options papers for these issues for the group to consider at their April meeting. After reviewing the options papers the group will decide whether or not to continue consideration of these issues.