



The Clean Water Act Action Plan Implementation Priorities Fact Sheet

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Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance
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<http://www.epa.gov/compliance/civil/cwa/cwaenfplan.html>

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Since the Clean Water Act was enacted in 1972, significant progress has been made to protect America's waters and to address the most important pollution problems affecting our communities. But, water pollution challenges—like urbanization, agricultural runoff and increases in the number of sources of water pollution—remain and demand new, efficient approaches to secure continued improvements in our country's water quality. To meet these challenges and to ensure that our nation's waters are drinkable, fishable and swimmable, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) created the Clean Water Act Action Plan. The Action Plan will build on the power of public accountability and transform the transparency and efficiency of Clean Water Act compliance and enforcement actions and their effects on watersheds and communities across the nation. The Action Plan's suite of new approaches will drive improved environmental performance for both the regulated pollution sources and state and EPA regulatory authorities to ensure clean water for our citizens.

Under the Clean Water Act Action plan, EPA will:

- **Improve compliance with the Clean Water Act requirements and reduce pollution through the power of public accountability.** EPA will replace outdated paper reporting systems with universal electronic reporting that will be readily available to the public on EPA's website. More than 45,000 municipal and industrial facilities are required to monitor and report their compliance with permitted pollutant discharge limits. Electronic reporting will reduce the reporting costs for these businesses and cities and dramatically improve the ability of the public and state and federal governments to monitor compliance with the Clean Water Act. EPA will also require electronic reporting of inspections and enforcement actions taken by states and EPA at these regulated sources so the public is better informed about the performance of their government in taking actions to ensure compliance and protect their water quality.
- **Create more efficient regulatory approaches that will ensure a more focused use of state and federal resources to compel better compliance and result in significant water quality improvement.** Develop a wide range of more efficient and effective regulatory approaches tailored to specific sources including: self-monitoring and electronic-reporting, self-certification, public reporting, and third party certification. In conjunction with these efforts, we will deploy new techniques to identify and remedy the most serious water pollution violations and continue to vigorously enforce against serious violations that threaten clean water.
- **Jointly plan, evaluate and better orchestrate federal and state CWA programs to focus resources and expertise on the most important water quality problems.** Efforts will include ensuring that the state and federal permitting, enforcement and compliance systems are working together cooperatively, effectively and efficiently.

For more information on the CWA Action Plan, please see EPA's website,
<http://www.epa.gov/compliance/civil/cwa/cwaenplan.html>