

WSG 148

Date Signed: November 29, 2001

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MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Expense Reimbursement Grants for The Operator Certification Program

FROM: Clive Davies, Acting Chief
Drinking Water Protection Branch

TO: Drinking Water Program Managers
Regions I-X

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide clarifying information on the process of awarding Operator Certification Expense Reimbursement Grants (ERGs) to States. I hope the following key pieces of information help as you award these grants.

States must receive EPA approval of their operator certification programs before they can apply for an ERG. This is not a concern for most States because Regions have approved forty-one State operator certification programs. Regions I, IV, V, VI, and VIII have approved programs for all of their States.

The Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water at headquarters must concur on award of the first State ERG application in each Region. In contrast to Primacy Revision Applications, the Office of Enforcement and Office of General Counsel at headquarters do not play a role in this concurrence. The Regional Administrator or the Water Division Director, if the Region chooses to delegate the signature authority, can award the remaining ERGs without headquarters concurrence.

Congratulations to Region V for being the first Region to award an ERG. Region I and Region X plan to award ERGs by the end of this calendar year.

We expect that a total of almost \$135 million will be available as grants to States for ERGs by fiscal year 2003. So far, we have set aside \$74,934,000 for the ERG program from fiscal year 1999 through fiscal year 2001 Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) appropriations. Funds from these years are now resident in Regional accounts and are available for award to States. We have received an additional \$30 million as part of the fiscal year 2002 DWSRF appropriation. We will re-program these funds to Regional accounts soon.

States may apply for ERGs based on their allotment of the full \$135 million. However, until the full amount of funding is available, we will award partial ERG grant amounts. As future funds become available, ERGs will be amended to increase their funding level.