



September 2016

Summary of H.R. XXXX

SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT AMENDMENTS OF 2016

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Democratic Staff

The Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 2016 would ensure safer water for communities nationwide. The bill would empower EPA to set needed drinking water standards; require water systems to address risks to their source water from climate change, industrial activity, and terrorism; authorize new investments in lead line replacement, climate resiliency, monitoring technology, and overall drinking water infrastructure; and improve compliance and community right to know.

The Bill Will Empower EPA to Set Needed Drinking Water Standards. The bill removes procedural hurdles that have prevented EPA from setting needed drinking water standards. It also increases the pace of regulatory determinations at EPA and sets deadlines for the development of standards on known dangers: lead, perchlorate, perfluorinated compounds, and algal toxins.

The Bill Will Reduce Exposure to Lead in Drinking Water. The bill provides grants for replacement of lead service lines in schools and communities, grants for replacement of school drinking fountains containing lead, and grants for lead monitoring programs in schools. The bill also requires EPA to prepare new guidance for schools planning lead infrastructure replacement and update guidance for schools and child care centers on monitoring, mitigating, and communicating issues with lead contamination.

The Bill Will Improve Climate Resiliency, Security, and Source Water Protection. The bill requires water systems to assess their vulnerabilities to climate change, terrorism, and source water contamination and develop plans to address those vulnerabilities, and provide funding to carry out those plans. The bill also addresses known threats to source water by removing the regulatory exemption for hydraulic fracturing and requiring a strategic plan to address drought.

The Bill Will Invest in Drinking Water Infrastructure. The bill incorporates the provisions of the Assistance, Quality, and Affordability Act to reauthorize and improve the drinking water State Revolving Fund. Improvements to the SRF would increase funding, increase assistance for disadvantaged communities, encourage good management of water systems, and prioritize sustainability.

The Bill Will Increase Compliance With Drinking Water Standards. The bill strengthens reporting to EPA and EPA enforcement authority. It also creates new regulations to require water systems to consider consolidation if they repeatedly fail to comply with drinking water standards.

The Bill Will Strengthen Community Right to Know. The bill provides more effective communication of drinking water problems by requiring EPA to revise the requirements for Consumer Confidence Reports and to create an online inventory of drinking water violations and exceedances, modeled after the Toxic Release Inventory. The bill also requires EPA to report to Congress on disproportionate impacts of drinking water violations, based on the online inventory.

The bill will promote innovation and technology. The bill establishes a grant program to spur the development of real-time drinking water monitoring technology and establishes a certification program for effective water loss and leak control technology. The bill also requires EPA to study the presence of pharmaceuticals and personal care products in drinking water.