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**HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE - HSC**

**DIVISION 104. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH [106500 - 119406]** ( *Division 104 added by Stats. 1995, Ch. 415, Sec. 6.*  )

**PART 12. DRINKING WATER [116270 - 117130]** ( *Part 12 added by Stats. 1995, Ch. 415, Sec. 6.*  )

**CHAPTER 4. California Safe Drinking Water Act [116270 - 116755]** ( *Chapter 4 added by Stats. 1995, Ch. 415, Sec. 6.*  )

**ARTICLE 7. Requirements and Compliance [116525 - 116596]** ( *Article 7 added by Stats. 1995, Ch. 415, Sec. 6.*  )

**116525.** (a) No person shall operate a public water system unless he or she first submits an application to the department and receives a permit as provided in this chapter. A change in ownership of a public water system shall require the submission of a new application.

(b) The department may require a new application whenever a change in regulatory jurisdiction has occurred.

(c) The department may renew, reissue, revise, or amend any domestic water supply permit whenever the department deems it to be necessary for the protection of public health whether or not an application has been filed.

(*Added by Stats. 1995, Ch. 415, Sec. 6. Effective January 1, 1996.*)

**116527.** (a) As used in this section, "water-related improvement" includes, but is not limited to, a water pipe, a water pump, or drinking water infrastructure.

(b) (1) Before a person submits an application for a permit for a proposed new public water system, the person shall first submit a preliminary technical report to the state board at least six months before initiating construction of any water-related improvement.

(2) In order to assist in expediting the permitting process, a person that is considering submitting an application for a permit for a proposed new public water system is encouraged, but is not required, to submit the preliminary technical report no later than seven days after submission of an application to the city or county for a building permit for any water-related improvement.

(3) For a proposed new public water system that would be regulated by a local primacy agency, the applicant shall also submit a copy of the preliminary technical report to the state board.

(4) The state board may approve the preliminary technical report and allow construction to proceed before the end of the six-month period. For a proposed new public water system that would be regulated by a local primacy agency, the state board and local primacy agency may approve the preliminary technical report and allow construction to proceed before the end of the six-month period.

(c) The preliminary technical report shall include all of the following:

(1) The name and type of each public water system for which any service area boundary is within three miles, as measured through existing public rights-of-way, of any boundary of the applicant's proposed public water system's service area.

(2) A discussion of the feasibility of each of the adjacent community water systems identified pursuant to paragraph (1) annexing, connecting, or otherwise supplying domestic water to the applicant's proposed new public water system's service area. The applicant shall consult with each adjacent community water system in preparing the report and shall include in the report any information provided by each adjacent community water system regarding the feasibility of annexing, connecting, or otherwise supplying domestic water to that service area.

(3) A discussion of all actions taken by the applicant to secure a supply of domestic water from an existing community water system for the proposed new public water system's service area.

(4) All sources of domestic water supply for the proposed new public water system.

(5) The estimated cost to construct, operate, and maintain the proposed new public water system, including long-term operation and maintenance costs and a potential rate structure.

(6) A comparison of the costs associated with the construction, operation and maintenance, and long-term sustainability of the proposed new public water system to the costs associated with providing water to the proposed new public water system's service area through annexation by, consolidation with, or connection to an existing community water system.

(7) A discussion of all actions taken by the applicant to pursue a contract for managerial or operational oversight from an existing community water system.

(8) An analysis of whether a proposed new public water system's total projected water supplies available during normal, single dry, or multiple dry water years during a 20-year projection will meet the projected water demand for the service area.

(9) Any information provided by the local agency formation commission. The applicant shall consult with the local agency formation commission if any adjacent public water system identified pursuant to paragraph (1) is a local agency as defined by Section 56054 of the Government Code.

(d) (1) If documents prepared to comply with Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of the Public Resources Code or any other application for public agency approval concerning providing drinking water to the proposed new public water system's service area include the information required by subdivision (c), including documentation of the consultation with each adjacent community water system and the local agency formation commission, the applicant may submit those documents to the state board in lieu of the preliminary technical report and the documents shall be considered the functional equivalent of the preliminary technical report.

(2) If documents prepared to comply with Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of the Public Resources Code or any other application for public agency approval concerning providing drinking water to the proposed new public water system's service area include some, but not all, of the information required by subdivision (c), including documentation of the consultation with an adjacent community water system and the local agency formation commission, the applicant shall submit those documents and the preliminary technical report to the state board and together those documents and the preliminary technical report shall be considered the functional equivalent of the preliminary technical report requirements of this section. A preliminary technical report submitted pursuant to this paragraph shall only be required to include information that is not otherwise addressed by the other submitted documents.

(e) Upon review of a preliminary technical report submitted pursuant to this section, the state board may do all of the following actions:

(1) If an existing public water system has not already sought annexation of the service area of a proposed new public water system from the local agency formation commission or the applicant has not already sought an extension of services agreement from an existing public water system, direct the applicant to undertake additional discussion and negotiation with the local agency formation commission and any existing public water system meeting the requirements of paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) that the state board determines has the technical, managerial, and financial capacity to provide an adequate and reliable supply of domestic water to the service area of the proposed new public water system. The state board shall not direct the applicant to undertake additional discussion and negotiation if documentation submitted to the state board demonstrates that additional discussion and negotiation is unlikely to be successful, including, but not limited to, documentation that the local agency formation commission has previously denied the application for an extension of service or annexation, or that the existing public water system has declined to apply to the local agency formation commission for approval of an extension of services to, or annexation of, the service area of the proposed new public water system.

(2) Direct the applicant to report on the results of discussion and negotiations conducted pursuant to paragraph (1) to the state board.

(3) Establish a time schedule for the applicant's performance of directives issued pursuant to this subdivision.

(f) (1) An applicant shall comply with the state board's directives as assigned in and consistent with subdivision (e) before submitting an application for a permit for a proposed new public water system under this chapter.

(2) An application for a permit for a proposed new public water system under this chapter shall not be deemed complete unless the applicant has complied with the requirements of this section.

(g) The state board's review of a preliminary technical report pursuant to this section shall not be deemed a project or approval of a permit application submitted under this chapter.

(h) The requirements of this section do not apply to either of the following:

(1) An application for a permit for a new public water system that was deemed complete prior to January 1, 2017, pursuant to the statutory permit application requirements effective at the date of the permit submission.

(2) An extension of, or annexation to, an existing public water system.

(i) (1) The requirements of this section do not apply to a service area where an applicant certifies in writing to the state board that the applicant will not rely on the establishment of a new public water system for its water supply. The state board shall acknowledge receipt of the applicant's certification in a timely manner.

(2) An applicant who certifies that the service area will not rely on the establishment of a new public water system and later seeks a permit for a new public water system shall comply with the provisions of this section and shall assume all risk of delay or rejection related to the permit application.

(j) (1) The provisions of this subdivision apply to a proposed new public water system that achieves either or both of the following:

(A) Consolidates two or more existing public water systems, existing state small water systems, or other existing water systems, which results in the creation of a new public water system.

(B) Provides water service in lieu of individual domestic wells.

(2) At least six months before the construction of any water-related improvements, an applicant for a new public water system that meets the criteria in paragraph (1) shall provide a written notice to the state board that does both of the following:

(A) Clearly describes the proposed new public water system and how it meets the criteria in paragraph (1).

(B) Requests an exemption from the requirements of this section.

(3) The state board shall promptly acknowledge receipt of a written notice described in paragraph (2). The state board shall have 30 days from the acknowledgment of receipt of the written notice to issue a written notice to the applicant that compliance with the requirements of this section is necessary and that an application for a permit of a new public water system under this chapter is not complete until the applicant has complied with the requirements of this section. A determination by the state board that compliance with the requirements of this section is necessary shall be final and is not subject to review by the state board. A determination by the state board pursuant to this subdivision is not considered a project subject to Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of the Public Resources Code.

(4) If the state board receives a written notice from a project applicant that satisfies the requirements of paragraph (2), the project described in the notice is deemed exempt from the requirements of this section on the 35th day following the date of the state board's acknowledgment of receipt of the written notice, unless the state board has issued a notice to comply pursuant to paragraph (3).

*(Amended by Stats. 2018, Ch. 195, Sec. 1. (AB 2900) Effective January 1, 2019.)*

**116530.** (a) A public water system shall submit a technical report to the state board as part of the permit application or when otherwise required by the state board. This report may include, but not be limited to, detailed plans and specifications, water quality information, physical descriptions of the existing or proposed system, information related to technical, managerial, and financial capacity and sustainability, and information related to achieving the goals of Section 106.3 of the Water Code, including affordability and accessibility.

(b) A public water system shall submit the report in the form and format and at intervals specified by the state board.

*(Amended by Stats. 2019, Ch. 120, Sec. 6. (SB 200) Effective July 24, 2019.)*

**116535.** Upon determination that an application submitted pursuant to this chapter is complete, the department shall make a thorough investigation of the proposed or existing plant, works, system, or water supply, and all other circumstances and conditions that it deems material, including any required financial assurance information.

*(Added by Stats. 1995, Ch. 415, Sec. 6. Effective January 1, 1996.)*

**116540.** (a) Following completion of the investigation and satisfaction of the requirements of paragraphs (1) and (2), the state board shall issue or deny the permit. The state board may impose permit conditions, requirements for system improvements, technical, financial, or managerial requirements, and time schedules as it deems necessary to ensure a reliable and adequate supply of water at all times that is pure, wholesome, potable, and does not endanger the health of consumers.

(1) A public water system that was not in existence on January 1, 1998, shall not be granted a permit unless the public water system demonstrates to the state board that the water supplier possesses adequate financial, managerial, and technical capability to ensure the delivery of pure, wholesome, and potable drinking water. This section shall also apply to any change of ownership of a public water system.

(2) A permit under this chapter shall not be issued to an association organized under Title 3 (commencing with Section 18000) of the Corporations Code. This section shall not apply to unincorporated associations that, as of December 31, 1990, are holders of a permit issued under this chapter.

(b) Notwithstanding Section 116330, a local primacy agency shall not issue a permit under this article without the concurrence of the state board.

(c) In considering whether to approve a proposed new public water system, the state board shall consider the sustainability of the proposed new public water system and its water supply in the reasonably foreseeable future, in view of global climate change, potential migration of groundwater contamination and other potential treatment needs, and other factors that can significantly erode a system's capacity.

(d) If the state board determines that it is feasible for the service area of the public water system addressed by an application under this article to be served by one or more permitted public water systems identified pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of Section 116527, the state board may deny the permit of a proposed new public water system.

(e) An applicant may petition the state board for reconsideration of a decision of action of the deputy director taken pursuant to this section.

*(Amended by Stats. 2019, Ch. 120, Sec. 7. (SB 200) Effective July 24, 2019.)*

**116545.** Prior to the issuance of any new, revised, renewed, or amended permit, or the denial of a permit, the department may conduct a public hearing to obtain additional public comment. Notice of the hearing shall be provided to the applicant and interested persons at least 30 days prior to the hearing. The department may require the applicant to distribute the notice of the hearing to affected consumers.

*(Added by Stats. 1995, Ch. 415, Sec. 6. Effective January 1, 1996.)*

**116550.** (a) No person operating a public water system shall modify, add to or change his or her source of supply or method of treatment of, or change his or her distribution system as authorized by a valid existing permit issued to him or her by the department unless the person first submits an application to the department and receives an amended permit as provided in this chapter authorizing the modification, addition, or change in his or her source of supply or method of treatment.

(b) Unless otherwise directed by the department, changes in distribution systems may be made without the submission of a permit application if the changes comply in all particulars with the waterworks standards.

*(Added by Stats. 1995, Ch. 415, Sec. 6. Effective January 1, 1996.)*

**116551.** The state board shall not issue a permit to a public water system or amend a valid existing permit for the use of a reservoir as a source of supply that is directly augmented with recycled water, as defined in subdivision (n) of Section 13050 of the Water Code, unless the state board does all of the following:

(a) Performs an engineering evaluation that evaluates the proposed treatment technology and finds that the proposed technology will ensure that the recycled water meets all applicable primary and secondary drinking water standards and poses no significant threat to public health.

(b) Holds at least three duly noticed public hearings in the area where the recycled water is proposed to be used or supplied for human consumption to receive public testimony on that proposed use. The state board shall make available to the public, not less than 10 days prior to the date of the first hearing held pursuant to this subdivision, the evaluations and findings made pursuant to subdivision (a).

*(Amended by Stats. 2015, Ch. 673, Sec. 7. (AB 1531) Effective January 1, 2016.)*

**116552.** The State Water Resources Control Board shall not issue a permit to a public water system or amend a valid existing permit to allow the use of point-of-use or point-of-entry treatment unless the State Water Resources Control Board determines, after conducting a public hearing in the community served by the public water system, that there is no substantial community opposition to the installation of the treatment devices. The issuance of a permit pursuant to this section shall be limited to not more than three years or until funding for centralized treatment is available, whichever occurs first.

*(Amended by Stats. 2015, Ch. 663, Sec. 2. (AB 434) Effective October 9, 2015.)*

**116555.** (a) Any person who owns a public water system shall ensure that the system does all of the following:

(1) Complies with primary and secondary drinking water standards.

(2) Will not be subject to backflow under normal operating conditions.

(3) Provides a reliable and adequate supply of pure, wholesome, healthful, and potable water.

(4) Employs or utilizes only water treatment operators that have been certified by the state board at the appropriate grade.

(5) Complies with the operator certification program established pursuant to Article 3 (commencing with Section 106875) of Chapter 4 of Part 1.

(b) Any person who owns a community water system or a nontransient noncommunity water system shall do all of the following:

(1) Employ or utilize only water distribution system operators who have been certified by the state board at the appropriate grade for positions in responsible charge of the distribution system.

(2) Place the direct supervision of the water system, including water treatment plants, water distribution systems, or both under the responsible charge of an operator or operators holding a valid certification equal to or greater than the classification of the treatment plant and the distribution system.

*(Amended by Stats. 2017, Ch. 561, Sec. 133. (AB 1516) Effective January 1, 2018.)*

**116555.5.** A public water system shall implement a cross-connection control program that complies with applicable regulations and with standards adopted by the board pursuant to Section 116407.

*(Added by Stats. 2017, Ch. 533, Sec. 2. (AB 1671) Effective January 1, 2018.)*

**116556.** Notwithstanding subdivision (c) of Section 116555 and its implementing regulations, including Sections 64562 and 64568 of the California Code of Regulations, the Redwood Valley County Water District, in order to relieve hardship, may make not more than 135 new  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch equivalent domestic service connections to its water system if all of the following conditions are met:

(a) The district has a contract, agreement, or independent water right to divert water from Lake Mendocino or another adequate source of water supply.

(b) Redwood Valley is an allowed place of use under that contract, agreement, or water right.

(c) The department has determined that the water source provides an adequate physical supply of water under its duly adopted waterworks standards.

(d) The connection will relieve hardship, as determined by the district based on objective proof that the structure served by the connection was constructed prior to December 31, 1997, and absent a connection, only has access to a water supply that furnishes an inadequate quality or quantity of water as measured by drinking water standards adopted by the district.

(e) The connections authorized by this section are in addition to connections otherwise allowed by law, including connections authorized by Section 116555.

*(Added by Stats. 1998, Ch. 259, Sec. 3. Effective August 4, 1998.)*

**116565.** (a) Each public water system shall submit an annual fee according to a fee schedule established by the state board pursuant to subdivision (c) for the purpose of reimbursing the state board for the costs incurred by the state board for conducting activities mandated by this chapter. The amount of reimbursement shall be sufficient to pay, but in no event shall exceed, the state board's costs in conducting these activities, including a prudent reserve in the Safe Drinking Water Account.

(b) Payment of the annual fee shall be due 90 calendar days following the due date established in the schedule. Failure to pay the annual fee within 90 calendar days shall result in a 10-percent late penalty that shall be paid in addition to the fee.

(c) The state board shall adopt, by regulation, a schedule of fees, as authorized by this section. The regulations may include provisions concerning the administration and collection of the fees.

(d) The state board shall set the amount of total revenue collected each year through the fee schedule at an amount equal to the amount appropriated by the Legislature in the annual Budget Act from the Safe Drinking Water Account for expenditure for the administration of this chapter, taking into account the reserves in the Safe Drinking Water Account. The state board shall review and revise the fees each fiscal year as necessary to conform with the amounts appropriated by the Legislature. If the state board determines that the revenue collected during the preceding year was greater than, or less than, the amounts appropriated by the Legislature, the state board may further adjust the fees to compensate for the over or under collection of revenue.

(e) (1) Except as provided in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (2), the regulations adopted pursuant to this section, any amendment thereto, or subsequent adjustments to the annual fees, shall be adopted by the state board as emergency regulations in accordance with Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code. The adoption of these regulations is an emergency and shall be considered by the Office of Administrative Law as necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety, and general welfare.

(2) Notwithstanding Section 116377, both of the following shall apply:

(A) The initial regulations adopted by the state board to implement this section shall be adopted in accordance with Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code, and may not rely on the statutory declaration of emergency in paragraph (1) or Section 116377.

(B) Any emergency regulations adopted by the state board, or adjustments to the annual fees made by the state board pursuant to this section, shall not be subject to review by the Office of Administrative Law and shall remain in effect until revised by the state board.

(f) A public water system under the jurisdiction of a local primacy agency shall pay the fees specified in this section to the local primacy agency in lieu of the state board. This section does not preclude a local health officer from imposing additional fees pursuant to Section 101325.

(g) This section shall become operative on July 1, 2016.

*(Repealed (in Sec. 19) and added by Stats. 2015, Ch. 24, Sec. 20. (SB 83) Effective June 24, 2015. Section operative July 1, 2016, by its own provisions.)*

**116577.** (a) Each person shall reimburse the state board for actual costs incurred by the state board for any of the following enforcement activities related to that person:

(1) Preparing, issuing, and monitoring compliance with, an order or a citation.

(2) Preparing and issuing public notification.

(3) Conducting a hearing pursuant to Section 116625.

(b) The state board shall submit an invoice for these enforcement costs to the person that requires payment before September 1 of the fiscal year following the fiscal year in which the costs were incurred. The invoice shall indicate the total hours expended, the reasons for the expenditure, and the hourly cost rate of the state board. The costs set forth in the invoice shall not exceed the total actual costs to the state board of enforcement activities specified in this section.

(c) Notwithstanding the reimbursement of enforcement costs of the local primacy agency pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 116595 by a public water system under the jurisdiction of the local primacy agency, a public water system or other person shall also reimburse enforcement costs, if any, incurred by the state board pursuant to this section.

(d) "Enforcement costs," as used in this section, does not include "litigation costs" pursuant to Section 116585.

(e) The state board shall not be entitled to enforcement costs pursuant to this section if a court determines that enforcement activities were in error.

(f) Payment of the invoice shall be made within 90 days of the date of the invoice. Failure to pay the invoice within 90 days shall result in a 10-percent late penalty that shall be paid in addition to the invoiced amount.

(g) The state board may, at its sole discretion, waive payment by a public water system of all or any part of the invoice or penalty.

*(Amended by Stats. 2023, Ch. 810, Sec. 2. (AB 664) Effective January 1, 2024.)*

**116585.** In a civil court action brought to enforce this chapter, the prevailing party or parties shall be awarded litigation costs, including, but not limited to, salaries, benefits, travel expenses, operating equipment, administrative, overhead, other litigation costs, and attorney's fees, as determined by the court. Litigation costs awarded to the state board by the court shall be deposited into the Safe Drinking Water Account. Litigation costs awarded to a local primacy agency by the court shall be used by that local primacy agency to offset the local primacy agency's litigation costs.

*(Amended by Stats. 2015, Ch. 24, Sec. 24. (SB 83) Effective June 24, 2015.)*

**116590.** (a) Funds received by the state board pursuant to this chapter shall be deposited into the Safe Drinking Water Account, which is hereby established, and shall be available for use by the state board, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for the purpose of providing funds necessary to administer this chapter and the Water Shutoff Protection Act (Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 116900)).

(b) A public water system may collect a fee from its customers to recover the fees paid by the public water system pursuant to this chapter.

(c) The total amount of funds received for state operations program costs to administer this chapter for fiscal year 2016–17 shall not exceed thirty-eight million nine hundred seven thousand dollars (\$38,907,000) and the total amount of funds received for administering this chapter for each fiscal year thereafter shall not increase by more than 5 percent of the amount received in the previous fiscal year plus any changes to salary, benefit, and retirement adjustments contained in each annual Budget Act.

(d) This section shall become operative on July 1, 2016.

*(Amended by Stats. 2023, Ch. 855, Sec. 1. (SB 3) Effective January 1, 2024.)*

**116595.** (a) A public water system under the jurisdiction of a local primacy agency shall reimburse the local primacy agency for any enforcement cost incurred by the local primacy agency related to any of the following relating to that water system:

- (1) Preparing, issuing, and monitoring compliance with, an order or a citation.
- (2) Preparing and issuing public notification.
- (3) Conducting a hearing pursuant to Section 116625.

(b) The local primacy agency shall submit an invoice to the public water system that requires payment, before September 1 of the fiscal year following the fiscal year in which the costs were incurred. The invoice shall indicate the total hours expended, the reasons for the expenditure, and the hourly cost rate of the local primacy agency. The invoice shall not exceed the total costs to the local primacy agency of enforcement activities specified in this subdivision. Notwithstanding the reimbursement to the state board of enforcement costs, if any, pursuant to Section 116577, any public water system under the jurisdiction of the local primacy agency shall also reimburse the local primacy agency for enforcement costs incurred by the local primacy agency pursuant to this section. The local primacy agency shall not be entitled to enforcement costs pursuant to this subdivision if a court determines that enforcement activities were in error. "Enforcement costs" as used in this subdivision does not include "litigation costs" as used in Section 116585.

(c) Payment of the invoice shall be made within 90 days of the date of the invoice. Failure to pay the invoice within 90 days shall result in a 10-percent late penalty that shall be paid in addition to the invoiced amount.

(d) The local primacy agency may, in its sole discretion, waive payment by a public water system of all or any part of the invoice or the penalty.

*(Amended by Stats. 2015, Ch. 24, Sec. 27. (SB 83) Effective June 24, 2015.)*

**116596.** (a) The state board shall require a public water system that has experienced a wildfire event of 300 acres or more, if the event damaged or destroyed a structure or structures connected to the public water system's water distribution system, to perform sample collection and analysis of its source waters, treatment facilities, conveyance facilities, distribution systems, or a combination thereof, for the presence of benzene as soon as it is safe to do so.

(b) If a public water system conducts sampling and finds detectable concentrations of benzene, the state board may require a public water system response, including all the following:

- (1) A requirement that investigation and additional testing be completed in consultation with, or at the direction of, the state board.
- (2) Timelines for investigation and additional testing.
- (3) Additional testing frequency and duration.
- (4) Additional testing locations, such as specific locations within a distribution system.
- (5) Flushing prior to confirmed detections of contamination.
- (6) Requirements to provide notice to affected customers upon a finding of contamination, including the form and content of the notices and when the notice shall be provided.
- (7) Remediation measures if contamination is found in the source waters, treatment facilities, conveyance facilities, distribution systems, or a combination thereof, such as taking sources offline, flushing within the distribution system, repairs, and replacements.

(c) For purposes of this section, "wildfire" has the same meaning as defined in Section 51177 of the Government Code.

(d) This section does not limit the state board's authority under any other law.

*(Added by Stats. 2023, Ch. 530, Sec. 2. (AB 541) Effective January 1, 2024.)*