Approximately $900 million in funds was obligated by the U.S. during 1975 for planning, building, improving or expanding of treatment facilities in the Great Lakes Basin, as authorized by the Water Act, EPA said. According to the agency, grants totaled $509 million in 1974, $419 million in 1973, and $225 million in 1972.

The U.S. and Canada agreed to reduce pollution in the Great Lakes Basin under the 1972 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

Water Pollution

EPA ISSUES HANDBOOK TO ASSIST STATES IN CONTINUING WATER QUALITY PLANNING

The Environmental Protection Agency has issued a handbook to help state agencies and EPA regional personnel in meeting responsibilities under recently adopted regulations covering water quality management planning (Current Developments, December 5, 1975, p. 1346).

The regulations, which detail amended policies and procedures for state continuing planning processes under Sections 208 and 303(e) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, require states to revise their existing planning processes and submit a new process description to EPA regional administrators by April 26, 1976.

In the past, water quality planning has been conducted by the states for all river basins, focusing primarily on point sources of pollution. The new regulations, however, encourage improved institutional arrangements for planning, broaden the scope of planning, and provide added flexibility for the states on where, when, and how planning will be conducted.

"A key change called for by the regulations is an intergovernmental, cooperative approach to planning among the states and areawide planning agencies. The states are encouraged to delegate planning to areawide and other federal, state, and local agencies, and then to oversee and integrate the planning outputs into a comprehensive whole," the handbook says.

Provisions of Regulations

The handbook describes 12 features of the revised regulations:

► Planning is to be a permanent process that guides the operating agencies. Plans are to be reviewed and, if necessary, revised annually, and they must identify problems, assess needs and set priorities, schedule actions, define regulatory programs and agency responsibilities, and coordinate planning and management.

► States are encouraged to delegate substantial portions of planning to areawide agencies, as well as to other units of government. State, local, areawide, interstate, and federal agencies all can be included, as appropriate.

► Locally elected officials will participate in drafting of the plan through a state policy advisory committee.

► While a state may delegate planning tasks to various governmental agencies, all of whom are equal in the planning process, the state itself is ultimately responsible for all planning, including planning within designated Section 208 areas.

► States are allowed great flexibility in designing the planning process, setting priorities, and choosing planning tasks and strategies. The only limits of the system are the 1983 water quality goals which plans must meet, the November 1978 deadline for initial submission of areawide and state plans, and the approval of the regional administrator.

► States are to set priorities for planning within geographical areas and by planning elements.

► Among important deadlines in the regulations are: January 27, 1976, the governor must identify areas and agencies eligible for 208 designation; April 26, 1976, the governor must submit to the regional administrator a revised statement of the state's planning process, must submit to the regional administrator a final decision on 208 designations, and must submit pollution-related information to each areawide planning agency; May 26, 1976, the regional administrator must approve or disapprove the planning process description; June 1, 1976, EPA administrative deadline in 208 grant applications; and November 1, 1978, initial areawide and state plans must be submitted to the regional administrator.

► State program plans, to be submitted annually, are part of a short-term state strategy of five years and a long-term goal of 20 years.

► The scope of planning under the new regulations is increased to include all topics significant to water quality.

► Areawide and state plans should be coordinated with planning in adjacent areawide agencies and neighboring states. Also, planning is to be integrated with water use, land use, and other natural resource and developmental planning within the same state or planning area.

► The new continuing planning process will build on existing plans and organizational arrangements.

► Public participation is to be structured and encouraged.

Copies of the handbook are available from Daniel L. Petke, WH-554, EPA, 401 M Street S.W., Washington, D.C. 20460.

Chemicals

EPA REGION I INITIATES PROGRAM TO MONITOR PCB DISCHARGES IN NEW ENGLAND

A research program aimed at monitoring polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in the air, water, and soil of New England and aimed at eliminating the public health hazard presented by the chemicals has been initiated by the Environmental Protection Agency's New England Regional Office.

The "conprehensive" monitoring and enforcement program began after analyses of fish collected from the Housatonic River near the General Electric plant in Pittsfield, Mass., showed PCB concentrations of approximately three to seven times the five-parts-per-million tolerance level established by the Food and Drug Administration, Regional Administrator John A.S. McGlennon said in a prepared statement January 12.

According to McGlennon, the program will include collection and analyses of fish, water, and sediment samples; a survey of New England industries to find previously undiscovered sources of PCBs; review and possible modification of federal NPDES permits; monitoring of selected landfill sites and drinking water supplies; and air monitoring at selected municipal incinerators. The report of the monitoring results at the land disposal sites, drinking water supplies, and municipal incinerators is expected to be available by spring or summer of 1976, the regional office said.

EPA Administrator Russell E. Train in December proposed a program (Current Developments, December 26, 1975, p. 1441), for agency administrative and regulatory action and voluntary action on the part of industry to eliminate production, importation, and use of PCBs.

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