

EPA-HOSTED SESSION ON RESEARCH TO PROTECT WATER RESOURCES IN THE UNITED STATES

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BACKGROUND

The terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001 and the subsequent delivery of Anthrax-contaminated letters through the mail raised concerns about protecting U.S. citizens and the nation's critical infrastructure. Presidential Decision Directive 63 (PDD 63) designates the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as the lead for securing the national water infrastructure. Therefore, the Agency is working to anticipate, prevent, respond to, and clean up contamination of this essential national resource. EPA is preparing to deter, detect, and respond to physical, biological, chemical, radiological and cyber attacks on U.S. water utilities or water systems. This preparation includes understanding the interdependencies among the national water infrastructure and other critical U. S. infrastructure. The Agency is guided in its efforts by the requirements of the Bioterrorism Act of 2002 (107-188). EPA has developed a *Strategic Plan for Homeland Security* that describes its role in homeland security, including research activities that support Program Offices and Regions. These research activities are focused in three areas: water security, safe buildings, and rapid risk assessment. In response to water security, EPA's Office of Research and Development (ORD) and Office of Water (OW) are working in partnership to address both technical support, and research and development needs that protect water resources and water systems.

CURRENT STATUS

A core group of representatives from ORD and OW is developing a water security research action plan to prioritize research needs as pertaining to water security. The action plan takes into account the requirements of the Bioterrorism Act of 2002 (107-188) and the EPA *Strategic Plan for Homeland Security*. Research areas and projects to support Agency water security goals are prioritized in partnership with other federal agencies and stakeholders. These research areas and projects are derived from the: Agency's "state-of-knowledge" report on drinking water systems; recommendations from the Water Protection Task Force on important technical support, and research and development needs; and input by various public organizations (e.g., American Water Works Association Research Foundation, Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies). The objectives of these sessions are to provide an update on the Agency's activities pertaining to water security research efforts and to present an overview of some of the other stakeholders' efforts.

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