



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Department of Environmental Protection

One Winter Street Boston, MA 02108 • 617-292-5500

DEVAL L. PATRICK
Governor

MAEVE VALLELY BARTLETT
Secretary

DAVID W. CASH
Commissioner

November 1, 2014

Dear Public Water Supplier:

RE: Safe Drinking Water Act Assessment for Fiscal Year 2016 (to be billed in December 2015)

Please forward a copy of this notice to the person within your system who is responsible for paying the bills for your public water system.

The Safe Drinking Water Act Assessment (the Assessment) was created by MGL Chapter 21A, section 18A, in 1993 to support the Commonwealth's effort to provide a safe and fit supply of water to all consumers of public drinking water through the provision of technical compliance assistance to all public water suppliers (PWSs). The Assessment also supports the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's (MassDEP) ability to maintain state Primacy to implement the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). Without Primacy, PWSs in Massachusetts would be directly regulated by the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). MGL Chapter 21A, section 18A also created the Safe Drinking Water Act Assessment Advisory Committee to assist in administering MassDEP's Assessment Program. The Committee makes recommendations about the Assessment rates to MassDEP's Commissioner, holds public meetings, and submits an Annual Report to the Massachusetts Legislature. Mass DEP's Commissioner is required to set the Assessment rate to be paid by all PWSs.

What Does the Assessment Provide for Public Water Systems and their Consumers

The Assessment funds assist MassDEP to regulate 1,735 PWSs, conduct training, and provide technical assistance to PWSs for SDWA compliance. No cost Training Contact Hours (TCHs) are awarded to PWSs for participating in the services that MassDEP offers. In addition, the Assessment supports state-specific programs that help PWSs and their customers save millions of dollars while ensuring a safe supply of water. A copy of the 2013 Annual Report from the Safe Drinking Water Act Assessment Advisory Committee can be obtained at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dep/water/laws/i-thru-z/sect70.pdf>. A list of accomplishments for 2013 is provided with this letter. New brochures describing the Assessment Program and *The Value of Public Drinking Water* are available on MassDEP's web site at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/news/advisory-committees/safe-drinking-water-act-assessment-advisory-committee.html> and <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dep/water/drinking/alpha/i-thru-z/water-valuesm.pdf>. We encourage you to review and share these informational brochures with others.

Collection by PWS of Assessment Funds

To assist PWSs, MGL Chapter 21A, section 18A requires PWSs to apportion the cost of the Assessment to customers according to the number of gallons of water they consume. Each PWS can decide how to invoice and collect the Assessment bill from its customers.

History of Rates and Increasing Challenges

Approximately half of all PWSs in Massachusetts pay the minimum \$20.00 Assessment bill. The minimum bill was originally \$10.00 and was raised to \$20.00 in 2007. The metered Assessment rate (\$8.50 per million gallons) has not been increased since 2003. Assessment revenue has been trending downward for many years due to less water use, which may mean a reduced Assessment contribution for many PWS customers. Since 2003, there have been four (4) significant public health protection rules added to the federal requirements with no increase in the Assessment rate. New federal rules since 2003 include the: Disinfection By-Products Stage 2 Rule, Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Long Term 2 Rule, Short Term Revisions to the Lead and Copper Rule and Ground Water Rule. Currently MassDEP is working to implement the new federal Revised Total Coliform Rule and assisting the U. S. EPA with the implementation of monitoring and reporting for the latest list of thirty (30) contaminants for the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule. For specific details on these new complex rules and other requirements, please visit the following EPA website <http://water.epa.gov/lawsregs/rulesregs/sdwa/index.cfm>.

The Assessment Rates for FY 2016

Although the challenges presented by the federal Safe Drinking Water Act are increasing on both PWSs and MassDEP, the Assessment rates will remain the same for FY16.

The Assessment rates for FY 2016, based on water use reported for calendar year 2013, are as follows:

- **\$8.50 per million gallons of water used by PWSs with master meters;**
- **Minimum bill for metered PWSs is \$20.00;**
- **Flat rate of \$250 for unmetered PWSs serving 201 through 899;**
- **Flat rate of \$100 for unmetered PWSs serving 101 through 200; and**
- **Flat rate of \$50 for unmetered PWSs serving up to 101.**

These rates are projected to generate \$1.86 million for FY16 and will be reflected in the MassDEP's bills to all PWSs that will be sent out in December 2015. Please note: Every year the Massachusetts legislature has appropriated funds to MassDEP collected through the Assessment Program. For many years, the legislature has provided additional funds. The total of the provided funds has been more than the revenue generated by the Assessment rates.

The bills that you receive in December 2014 will be for the Safe Drinking Water Act Assessment for FY 2015. The FY 2015 bill is based on water use reported by PWSs on the Annual Statistical Report for calendar year 2012.

Thank you for the support that you have shown to MassDEP's Drinking Water Program over the past year. Please contact Kathy Romero at 617-292-5727 or kathleen.romero@state.ma.us, or me at program.director-dwp@state.ma.us if you have any questions about the Assessment Program and the drinking water protection activities and support provided by MassDEP. I look forward to continuing to work with you on this important public health protection program.

Sincerely,



Yvette DePeiza
Program Director
Mass/DEP Drinking Water Program

Attachment:
List of Accomplishments