

2021-118 AUDIT SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

State Water Resources Control Board— Clean Drinking Water

The audit by the California State Auditor will provide independently developed and verified information related to the State Water Resources Control Board's (State Water Board) efforts to help provide Californians with clean drinking water. The audit's scope will include, but not be limited to, the following activities:

1. Review and evaluate the laws, rules, and regulations significant to the audit objectives.
2. Evaluate the State Water Board's efforts to ensure that all Californians have access to clean water. Determine where Californians lack clean drinking water and whether the State Water Board has provided adequate funding and assistance to benefit people in those areas.
3. Evaluate the State Water Board's outreach efforts to promote and encourage participation in its program to help ensure Californian's access to clean water. To the extent possible, evaluate the demand for clean water and drinking water from disadvantaged communities throughout California and determine whether the State Water Board's outreach efforts appropriately focus on communities most in need.
4. Analyze the State Water Board's effectiveness in administering the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, Clean Water State Revolving Fund, and any related financial assistance programs, by doing the following:
 - (a) Evaluate the State Water Board's processes for awarding financial assistance for infrastructure needed to achieve or maintain compliance with federal and state clean water requirements.
 - (b) Assess the metrics the State Water Board uses to evaluate applications for financial assistance, and determine whether it applies these metrics consistently.
 - (c) Evaluate the timeliness and effectiveness of the State Water Board's processing of applications for financial assistance.
 - (d) Determine whether the State Water Board ensures that recipients of financial assistance use funds in accordance with applicable statutes, State Water Board policies, and best practices.
 - (e) Analyze data and information from the last five years to determine how effective the State Water Board has been in providing financial assistance to support access to clean water, including the number and types of eligible applicants; the number and types of projects; financing terms, such as interest rate, loan repayment, and principal forgiveness; and any other relevant information.

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5. Review the Technical Assistance Funding (TAF) program that is available to address the water needs of small, disadvantaged communities throughout California to ascertain the following:
 - (a) Whether the TAF program has coordinated effectively with other programs to meet the needs of these small, disadvantaged communities.
 - (b) How many communities have received assistance from the TAF program and where they are located.
 - (c) Whether the State Water Board has implemented the TAF program effectively.
6. Assess efforts by the safe and affordable funding for equity and resilience program to proactively identify, reach out to, and assist water systems in providing an adequate and affordable supply of safe drinking water.
7. To the extent possible, conduct a customer survey of water systems or communities out of compliance with clean water standards to determine why they are out of compliance and whether the State Water Board or the Legislature could make changes to help ensure that all Californians have access to clean water.
8. Review and assess any other issues that are significant to the audit.