

EPA invests \$8 million to secure San Francisco's drinking water supply

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San Francisco to pilot cutting edge early-warning contaminant monitoring, detection systems

SAN FRANCISCO – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today announced an \$8 million grant awarded to San Francisco to help the city develop and evaluate a drinking water contamination warning system for its drinking water supply.

The pilot project, called the Water Security Initiative, is expected to serve as a model for the nation's drinking water utilities. The grant funds will allow the San Francisco Public Utility Commission to pilot monitoring, sampling, detection and early warning systems. The \$8 million EPA grant will be matched by a \$3 million investment by the SFPUC. New York City also recently received a similar grant, announced last month.

"The challenge of protecting our nation's drinking water systems is not just an EPA challenge, a state challenge, or a San Francisco challenge, it's everyone's challenge," said Wayne Nastri, the U.S. EPA's administrator for the Pacific Southwest region. "Through technology, innovation and collaboration with pilot projects like this, we can provide clean, safe water for every American."

"Safe, reliable drinking water is a cornerstone of the Bay Area's public health and economic vitality," said Mayor Gavin Newsom. "With this federal grant, San Francisco can pilot cutting-edge monitoring and detection tools that will help keep our precious drinking water safe from contamination."

"Protecting our nation's drinking water supplies from contamination – whether naturally occurring or from terrorist acts – must be the shared responsibility of both our federal and local governments," said Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi. "I'm proud that these federal funds will support San Francisco's efforts to deploy innovative water quality tools and keep our water system safe."

The SFPUC currently tests drinking water more than 90,000 times per year throughout the regional water system using state-of-the-art sampling, detection and analysis tools. The EPA's grant will allow the SFPUC to also deploy and pilot new high technology equipment that monitors and detects for new potential contaminants at key locations in the water system.

While specific details about the system can't be divulged for security reasons, the contamination warning system to be installed and evaluated by San Francisco involves online water quality monitoring, public health surveillance, sampling and analysis, enhanced security monitoring and consumer complaint surveillance. The warning system is also designed to be sustainable for long-term operation and to even improve water quality management.

The SFPUC's Hetch Hetchy regional water system delivers reliable, high quality drinking water to more than 2.4 million Bay Area residents in San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Alameda Counties from protected Sierra and Bay Area reservoirs and watersheds.

For more information about the EPA's Water Security Initiative, visit:

<http://cfpub.epa.gov/safewater/watersecurity/index.cfm>. For more information about the SFPUC water system and San Francisco's water quality, visit www.sfwater.org.

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