

1       Sec. 1. WATER QUALITY BLOCK GRANTS

2           (a) Establishment; purpose.

3               (1) The Secretary of Natural Resources, the Secretary of Agriculture,  
4               Food and Markets, and the Secretary of Transportation shall coordinate prior to  
5               awarding water quality grants or financing in order to maximize the water  
6               quality benefit or impact of funded projects in a watershed planning basin.  
7               Where possible, grants or financing for water quality programs shall be issued  
8               as a block grant that enhances capacity of regional partners, including regional  
9               planning commissions and natural resource conservation districts.

10            (2) A portion of each block grant issued under this section shall include  
11            funds authorized for use for the following:

12                (A) evaluation of the need for staffing or support in the watershed  
13                planning basin; and

14                (B) identification and development of water quality projects listed  
15                under the basin plan for the watershed as necessary for the restoration and  
16                protection of the waters of the State.

17            (b) Requirements. On or before August 1, 2018, the Secretary of Natural  
18            Resources and the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall establish a  
19            process for coordinating water quality grants and issuing water quality block  
20            grants under this section. The process shall address the following:

21                (1) requirements for eligibility;

- 1           (2) a system of priorities for award of block grants;
- 2           (3) performance measures or accountability requirements for recipients  
3 of water quality block grants;
- 4           (4) uses for which a recipient of a water block grant may allocate or  
5 award portions of the block grants to other eligible entities for implementation  
6 of water quality programs or projects in a river basin;
- 7           (5) methods for identifying watersheds or other areas where the State  
8 should focus on enhancing the capacity of local partners; and
- 9           (6) any other provision necessary to implement the block grants under  
10 this section.