

1 Sec. 1. WATER QUALITY BLOCK GRANTS

2 (a) Definition. As used in this section, “local partner” means a regional
3 planning commission, natural resource conservation district, or watershed
4 organization located or operating in the watershed for which the Agency of
5 Natural Resources has issued a watershed basin plan.

6 (b) Establishment; purpose.

7 (1) The Secretary of Natural Resources, the Secretary of Agriculture,
8 Food and Markets, and the Secretary of Transportation shall coordinate prior to
9 awarding water quality grants or financing in order to maximize the water
10 quality benefit or impact of funded projects in a watershed planning basin.
11 Where possible, grants or financing for water quality programs shall be issued
12 as a block grant that enhances the capacity of local partners.

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

15 (A) to support capacity to implement projects in the watershed basin;

16 and

17 (B) to identify and develop water quality projects listed under the
18 basin plan for the watershed as necessary for the restoration and protection of
19 the waters of the State.

20 (b) Requirements. On or before January 1, 2019, the Secretary of Natural
21 Resources, the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets, and the Secretary

1 of Transportation shall establish a process for coordinating water quality grants
2 and issuing water quality block grants under this section. The process shall
3 address the following:

4 (1) requirements for eligibility;

5 (2) a system of priorities for award of block grants;

6 (3) performance measures, reporting requirements, or accountability
7 requirements for recipients of water quality block grants;

8 (4) uses for which a recipient of a water block grant may allocate or
9 award portions of the block grants to other eligible entities for implementation
10 of water quality programs or projects in a river basin;

11 (5) methods for identifying watersheds or other areas where the State
12 should focus on enhancing the capacity of local partners; and

13 (6) any other provision necessary to implement the block grants under
14 this section.