

under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) as amended, and solicit public input on major technical and implementation issues, and on preferred approaches for continued public involvement. This meeting will be very similar in content to the arsenic stakeholders meeting EPA held in Washington, DC on September 11–12, 1997. At the upcoming meeting, EPA is again seeking input from State and Tribal drinking water programs, the regulated community (water systems), public health organizations, academia, environmental and public interest groups, engineering firms, and other stakeholders on a number of issues related to developing the NPDWR for arsenic. EPA encourages the full participation of stakeholders throughout this process.

DATES: The stakeholder meeting on arsenic in drinking water will be held on Wednesday, February 25, 1998 from 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Central Standard Time.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held in the Holiday Inn Riverwalk (210) 224–2500, which is located at 217 North St. Mary's Street, San Antonio, TX 78205. To register for the meeting, please contact the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1–800–426–4791 between 9 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. Those registered for the meeting by Wednesday, February 18, 1998, will receive an agenda, logistics sheet, and discussion papers prior to the meeting. Members of the public who cannot attend the meeting in person may participate via conference call and should register with the Safe Drinking Water Hotline by February 18 in order to receive copies of the overheads in advance. Please provide your name, organization, title, mailing address, telephone number, facsimile number, e-mail address and telephone number for EPA to connect the caller via conference call [if applicable] for the "Arsenic meeting."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For general information on meeting logistics, please contact the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1–800–426–4791. For information on the activities related to developing the NPDWR for arsenic, contact the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1–800–426–4791, or visit the EPA Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water arsenic webpage at <http://www.epa.gov/OGWDW/ars/arsenic.html>, which contains electronic copies of the discussion papers from the September 11–12, 1997 stakeholders meeting. Registrants must make their own room reservations for the Holiday Inn Riverwalk by January 30, 1998 by

calling 1–800–422–2419 and mention "EPA Arsenic Meeting" to guarantee the room rate of \$94.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A. Background

Arsenic (As) is a naturally occurring element found in the human body and is present in food, water, and air. Arsenic in drinking water occurs in ground water and surface water and is associated with certain natural geologic conditions, as well as with contamination from human activities. Arsenic ingestion is linked to skin cancer and arsenic inhalation to lung cancer. In addition, arsenic ingestion seems to be associated with vascular effects, gastrointestinal irritation, and cancers of the kidney, bladder, liver, lung, and other organs. Water primarily contains inorganic arsenic species ($\text{As}^{\text{V}+}$ and $\text{As}^{\text{III}+}$), which tend to be more toxic than organic forms.

In 1976 EPA issued a National Interim Primary Drinking Water Regulation for arsenic at 50 parts per billion (ppb; $\mu\text{g/L}$). Under the 1986 amendments to SDWA, Congress directed EPA to publish Maximum Contaminant Level Goals (MCLGs) and promulgate National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (NPDWRs) for 83 contaminants, including arsenic. When EPA failed to meet the statutory deadline for promulgating an arsenic regulation, a citizens' group filed suit to compel EPA to do so. EPA entered into a consent decree to issue the regulation. EPA held internal workgroup meetings throughout 1994, addressing risk assessment, treatment, analytical methods, arsenic occurrence, exposure, costs, implementation issues, and regulatory options before deciding in early 1995 to defer the regulation in order to better characterize health effects.

On August 6, 1996, Congress amended the SDWA, adding section 1412(b)(12)(A) which requires, in part, that EPA propose a NPDWR for arsenic by January 1, 2000 and issue a final regulation by January 1, 2001. The current maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 50 $\mu\text{g/L}$ remains in effect until the effective date of the revised rule.

The 1996 amendments to the SDWA also directed EPA to develop by February, 1997, a comprehensive arsenic research plan to assess health risks associated with exposure to low levels of arsenic. In December 1996, EPA announced the availability of the arsenic research plan, and the public had an opportunity to comment on the paper at a scientific peer review meeting in January, 1997. EPA reported to Congress in late January that the plan was publicly available and would be

revised after consideration of the final report of the scientific peer review group, which was subsequently published May 8, 1997. In conducting the studies in the arsenic research plan, EPA will consult with the National Academy of Sciences, other Federal agencies, and other interested public and private parties.

B. Request for Stakeholder Involvement

EPA intends for the proposed NPDWR for arsenic to incorporate the best available science, risk assessment, treatment technologies, occurrence data, cost/benefit analyses, and stakeholder input on technical and implementation issues.

The stakeholders meeting will cover a broad range of issues including: (1) regulatory process, including risk management decisions; (2) arsenic risk assessment (exposure, health assessment, national occurrence); (3) key technical assessments (treatment technologies, treatment residuals, cost, analytical methods); (4) small system concerns; and (5) future stakeholder involvement. Background materials on arsenic in drinking water issues will be sent in advance of the meeting to those who register with the Safe Drinking Water Hotline by Wednesday, February 18, 1998.

EPA has announced this public meeting to hear the views of stakeholders on EPA's plans for activities to develop a NPDWR for arsenic. The public is invited to provide comments on the issues listed above and other issues related to the arsenic in drinking water regulation during the February 25, 1998 meeting and during future opportunities for stakeholder participation.

Dated: January 21, 1998.

Cynthia C. Dougherty,

Director, Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

ITU Proposal for Cost Recovery

AGENCY: Federal Communications Commission.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Federal Communications Commission seeks comment on the appropriateness and feasibility of a proposal by the International Telecommunications Commission (ITU) for cost recovery for registering and processing satellite notifications.

In particular, the Commission seeks comment on how the Commission could continue to make the ITU notifications while ensuring that the applicant makes cost recovery payments directly to the ITU.

DATES: Submit comments on or before February 27, 1998, and reply comments on or before March 27, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Richard B. Engelman, Chief Planning and Negotiations Division, International Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, 2000 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20554.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: During the June 23–27, 1997 meeting of the International Telecommunications Union Council, the subject of ITU cost recovery for registering and processing satellite notifications, as well as other products and services including terrestrial notifications, was addressed. The Council agreed to Resolution 1113 that adopted the principle of cost recovery for satellite registrations and notifications. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) seeks comment on the appropriateness and feasibility of the recovery by the ITU of such fees and how, if adopted, the ITU cost recovery fees should be administered within the FCC notification process.

Federal Communications Commission.

Magalie Roman Salas,
Secretary.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

[CC Docket No. 96–45 and 97–160; DA 97–2623]

Universal Service

AGENCY: Federal Communications Commission.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In this Public Notice, released December 16, 1997, the Common Carrier Bureau revises and approves universal service contribution factors for the first quarter of 1998. These factors will be used to calculate first quarter contributions to universal service.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Diane Law, Common Carrier Bureau, Accounting and Audits Division, (202) 418–7400, or via E-mail to “dlaw@fcc.gov.”

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In the *Universal Service Order* released on May 8, 1997, the Commission

established new federal universal service support mechanisms consistent with the Communications Act of 1934, as amended.¹ The Commission required all telecommunications carriers that provide interstate telecommunications services, providers of interstate telecommunications, and payphone service providers to contribute to the federal universal service support mechanisms.² The Commission found that contributions for the schools, libraries, and rural health care support mechanisms would be based on interstate, intrastate, and international end-user telecommunications revenues.³ The Commission also found that contributions for the high cost, rural, and insular and low-income support mechanisms would be based on interstate and international end-user telecommunications revenues.⁴

On July 18, 1997, the Commission released an Order directing the National Exchange Carrier Association (NECA) to create an independently functioning not-for-profit subsidiary, the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), through which it will administer temporarily certain aspects of the federal universal service support mechanisms.⁵ The Commission also directed NECA to create two independent, not-for-profit entities, Schools and Libraries Corporation and Rural Health Care Corporation, to administer certain aspects of the schools, libraries, and rural health care support mechanisms.⁶ The Commission instructed USAC, Schools and Libraries Corporation, and Rural Health Care Corporation to submit projections of demand and administrative expenses for their respective support mechanisms for the first quarter of 1998 to the Commission at least sixty days before the start of the first quarter of 1998.⁷ USAC also was required to compile total interstate, intrastate, and international end-user telecommunications revenues and submit that information to the Commission.⁸ The Commission stated

that it would publish these figures and the proposed quarterly contribution factors in a Public Notice.⁹

On November 13, 1997, using the information submitted on October 31, 1997 by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), Schools and Libraries Corporation, and Rural Health Care Corporation (collectively, the administrative corporations), the Accounting and Audits Division (Division) announced the proposed universal service contribution factors for the first quarter of 1998.¹⁰ Pursuant to the Commission's rules, those contribution factors would have been deemed approved on November 28, 1997 if the Commission had taken no action regarding the proposed contribution factors.¹¹ On November 26, 1997, however, the Division extended the review period for the proposed first quarter 1998 universal service contribution factors until December 5, 1997.¹² On December 5, 1997, the Division further extended the period of time during which the Commission could modify the proposed universal service contribution factors for the first quarter of 1998 until December 12, 1997.¹³ On December 12, 1997, the Division extended the review period for the proposed contribution factors until December 16, 1997.¹⁴

On December 16, 1997, the Commission released the *Third Order on Reconsideration in CC Docket 96–45*. In that Order, the Commission concluded that it could reduce the maximum amounts collected during the first six months of 1998 for the schools and libraries and rural health care support mechanisms without jeopardizing the sufficiency of the support mechanisms.¹⁵ Consistent with the Commission's action on reconsideration, in this Public Notice, the Bureau revises the projections of demand for the low income and rural health care support mechanisms and

⁹ NECA Report and Order at para. 48.

¹⁰ Proposed First Quarter Universal Service Contribution Factors, *Public Notice*, DA 97–2392 (rel. Nov. 13, 1997). On November 19, 1997, AT&T filed comments on the November 13th Public Notice. See Letter from Rick D. Bailey, AT&T, to Magalie Roman Salas, FCC, dated November 19, 1997.

¹¹ 47 CFR 54.709(a)(3).

¹² Extended Review Period for First Quarter Universal Service Contribution Factors, *Public Notice*, DA 97–2510 (rel. Nov. 26, 1997).

¹³ Further Extension of Review Period for First Quarter Universal Service Contribution Factors, *Public Notice*, DA 97–2560 (rel. Dec. 5, 1997).

¹⁴ Additional Extension of Review Period for First Quarter Universal Service Contribution Factors, *Public Notice*, DA 97–2600 (rel. Dec. 12, 1997).

¹⁵ Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, *Third Order on Reconsideration*, CC Docket 96–45, FCC 97–411 (rel. Dec. 16, 1997).

¹ Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, *Report and Order*, 12 FCC Rcd 8776 (1997) (*Universal Service Order*).

² *Universal Service Order*, 12 FCC Rcd at 9173–9178, 9183–9185.

³ *Universal Service Order*, 12 FCC Rcd at 9203, 9205.

⁴ *Universal Service Order*, 12 FCC Rcd at 9200, 9202–9203.

⁵ Changes to the Board of Directors of the National Exchange Carrier Association, Inc., Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, *Report and Order and Second Order on Reconsideration*, CC Dockets No. 97–21, 96–45, FCC 97–253 (rel. July 18, 1997) (*NECA Report and Order*).

⁶ NECA Report and Order at para. 57.

⁷ NECA Report and Order at para. 47.

⁸ NECA Report and Order at paras. 43–48. See also 47 CFR 54.709(a)(2), (3), and 54.711(b).