

Reinforce the Source

A Source Water Collaborative innovation challenge



What is an “Innovation Challenge”?

An Innovation Challenge is a type of prize competition that seeks innovative solutions from the public to address mission-centric problems, whether technical, scientific, or creative. Prize competitions are simple at their core: a “seeker”—in this case, the Source Water Collaborative—offers prize incentives for “solvers” to identify a solution to a particular issue.

What issue do we want to address? With thousands of new chemicals produced each year and tens of thousands already inventoried, there are many pollutants that threaten drinking water sources but have no recommended criteria under section 304(a) of the Clean Water Act, or drinking water standards or health advisories under Safe Drinking Water Act. States set water quality criteria to establish the limits for contaminant concentrations in state waters to protect their beneficial uses, such as drinking water supply. States have insufficient resources and access to information to derive water quality standards for all priority chemicals in a timely manner, leaving our drinking water sources at risk.

How are we addressing this issue? The Source Water Collaborative is staging an Innovation Challenge, asking the public to design a user-friendly repository for state data, technical information and analysis, risk assessments, and draft/final criteria (as well as numeric translators to narrative criteria) for pollutants with no 304(a) recommended criteria and/or drinking water standards. This clearinghouse would reduce duplication of state data collection and risk assessment.

Innovation Challenge Applicants will

- 1) **Develop** information flow from relevant sources and program preliminary code.
- 2) **Design** a graphical user interface that compiles all necessary information in a simple, accessible manner. **The user interface should make it easy and efficient for**
 - a. States and others with regulatory approval under the CWA to *submit contaminant information* (e.g., criteria)
 - b. States, watershed groups, the public, and other stakeholders to *find information* in the tool

System Features

- Shared online library for contaminant information
- Helps state regulators set criteria for water quality in sources of public water supply
- Communicates critical contaminant information to states and the public
- Connects users to an online knowledge community for contaminants of concern

Possible use case: Bromide water quality criteria

- EPA does not currently have a Nationally Recommended Water Quality Criteria for bromide in watersheds. Some states have found high levels of bromide in source waters.
- A shared information library would allow states, watershed groups, and the public to learn how other states have addressed bromide. The library could also link to monitoring data and discussion forums (e.g., listserves) for stakeholders to share information specific to contaminants of concern.

Data sources

This challenge will primarily focus on sharing state draft and final criteria for drinking water pollutants, as well as numeric translators to narrative criteria, technical support documents, and relevant federal standards.