



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
OFFICE OF DRINKING WATER

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February 12, 2024

Greetings Honorable Tribal Leaders and Tribal Partners:

SUBJECT: Informative- Disadvantaged Communities Rulemaking Follow Up

I am writing today to provide an update about the Washington State Department of Health rulemaking to update the definition and criteria “disadvantaged communities” under the [Drinking Water State Revolving Fund](#). Please see the previous Dear Tribal Leader Letter dated November 6, 2023 for more information about this rulemaking effort.

The feedback from tribal representatives shared during our November 27, 2023 listening session and during the informal comment period is that tribal public water systems should be included in the definition of disadvantaged communities. The listening session slides and meeting notes can be provided upon request.

Based on this feedback, **we are prepared to proceed with including tribes in the definition of disadvantaged communities**. This would mean tribal public water systems serving residential connections that apply and are approved for loans through the Washington State Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program would automatically qualify for loan principal forgiveness.

We are in the informal comment period until March 1, 2024. Informal comments can be submitted to DWSRF@doh.wa.gov or by contacting us at 564-233-1799. We anticipate the draft rule language and environmental justice assessment will be [published here](#) in May 2024.

If you have additional questions please contact Chelsea Cannard, Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Public Health Advisor, at 564-233-1799 or chelsea.cannard@doh.wa.gov. For tribal relations issues, please contact Candice Wilson, Executive Director of Tribal Public Health and Relations, at 360-819-7626 or candice.wilson@doh.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

Holly R. Myers
Director, Office of Drinking Water
Environmental Public Health
Washington State Department of Health

cc: Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH, Secretary of Health, Department of Health

Candice Wilson, Quatz'tenaut (Lummi), Executive Director of Tribal Public Health and Relations, Department of Health

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