

SOLE SOURCE AQUIFER DESIGNATION FACT SHEET

1. What is Sole Source Aquifer (SSA) designation?

- SSA designation is provided for under the Safe Drinking Water Act and is granted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA).
- The purpose of SSA designation is to prevent federal funds from being used for projects that threaten to contaminate an aquifer so as to create a significant hazard to public health.
- Proposed federally funded projects within an aquifer's designated area are reviewed for their potential to contaminate the aquifer. Only individual projects using significant federal funds receive reviews. Projects funded solely by the private sector are not reviewed.
- SSA impact review does not seek to stop the proposed federally funded project. Rather, the review seeks to modify the project, if necessary, to mitigate potentially negative impacts.
- Nationally, no projects have been canceled and no federal funds have been lost by any community because of SSA review.

2. How does an aquifer receive SSA designation?

- A petition must be filed with the U.S. EPA that provides the required information and requests SSA designation.
- The aquifer must be the sole or principal source of drinking water for 50% or more of the area's population.
- Once a petition is submitted, designation usually takes one to two years.
- Clear, concise and complete applications from true sole source aquifer areas supported by a majority of communities within the hydrogeologic boundaries of the aquifer area are designated in the least amount of time.

3. What are the economic development effects of SSA designation?

- SSA designation is not perceived as having any negative effects on economic development. In fact, the continued availability of a good quality water supply is recognized nationwide as essential to sustain existing development and to promote growth.

4. What are the benefits of SSA designation?

- SSA designation provides a formal mechanism for local input into the federal interagency groundwater impact reviews.
- It creates an increased public awareness of the importance of the aquifer to the area.
- It shows evidence of public and private commitment to protection of the aquifer.

This fact sheet was compiled from U.S. EPA materials in 1991 by the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI). For more information, call OKI at (513) 621-6300.