

## Future Treatments Alternative Study Fact Sheet

Over the past several years, Washington Aqueduct has been working with a team of internationally-recognized water treatment experts to help determine whether the Dalecarlia and McMillan water treatment plants (WTPs) should incorporate one or more “advanced treatment” processes into their operations. Whether a water utility uses advanced treatments, such as ozonation, UV, activated carbon, and membranes, depends on the utility’s unique challenges (increased turbidity, source water contamination, etcetera).

Answers to common questions about the project, known as the Future Treatment Alternatives Study (FTAS), are given below:

Question	Answer
Does Washington Aqueduct meet existing Safe Drinking Water Act regulations?	Yes, Washington Aqueduct currently complies with all aspects of SDWA so there is no need to take immediate action.
If Washington Aqueduct and its wholesale customers (DC Water, Arlington County, and City of Falls Church) want to pursue advanced treatment, is there an obvious treatment choice?	The team identified 14 challenges that Washington Aqueduct could focus on to enhance drinking water quality, such as nitrification, Cryptosporidium, tastes/odors, along with emerging issues like hexavalent chromium. No single treatment process would be capable of addressing more than a couple of the highest priority challenges. There are a number of feasible options, with varying economic and environmental consequences.
As a government facility, can appropriations be used to implement <i>all</i> treatment enhancements?	100% of Washington Aqueduct’s money comes from the water bills paid by ordinary consumers in its service area. No federal funding is appropriated to the Aqueduct. Further, implementation of all treatment options would be prohibitively expensive.
Are there other non-financial tradeoffs that affect decisions on which treatment(s) to select?	In addition to projected costs—which ranged from \$80 to \$550 million for the most promising technologies—Washington Aqueduct’s carbon footprint and chemical consumption could dramatically increase. With any change, there is the risk of unintended negative consequences.
Are there ways to enhance drinking water quality besides adding advanced treatment processes?	Yes, there are at least two non-treatment alternatives: doing more to protect the watershed, and investing in distribution system infrastructure. Washington Aqueduct already participates in a partnership with other utilities in the Potomac River Basin, to improve source water protection. Along with water utilities across the country, Washington Aqueduct and its customers face the need to renew or replace the distribution system piping and other system infrastructure as it ages. Addressing root causes of water quality degradation may do even more than advanced treatment to encourage drinking water quality.

In the ever-changing water regulatory environment, EPA is considering, among other near-term changes, improving methods for detecting Cryptosporidium, regulating perchlorate and NDMA, and changing the way water systems assess microbial contamination in the distribution system. EPA's decisions in these areas over the next few years could significantly affect Washington Aqueduct's Customer Board decisions on drinking water enhancement strategies.