



## Senator Scott Wiener, 11<sup>th</sup> Senate District

### Senate Bill 966 – Onsite Non-Potable Water System Standards

#### SUMMARY

Although increasing numbers of onsite water treatment systems are being installed across California for non-potable use, current water quality standards are limited and do not address ongoing oversight, management, and monitoring requirements to protect public health. Senate Bill 966 directs the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to develop regulations creating risk-based water quality standards for the onsite treatment and reuse of non-potable water, which will assist local governments in developing oversight and management programs for onsite non-potable water systems in commercial, mixed-use, and multi-family residential buildings.

#### BACKGROUND/EXISTING LAW

As water supplies become more strained and climate change persists, communities are looking for new ways to develop and manage local water supplies and increase resiliency. Through the Recycled Water Policy, SWRCB encourages communities to enhance water conservation, water reuse, and the use of stormwater. Onsite non-potable water systems collect non-potable sources such as graywater, roof runoff, stormwater, and blackwater, and treat it so that it can be reused for non-potable purposes such as toilet flushing and irrigation.

Despite the many benefits that can be achieved by deploying onsite non-potable water systems, widespread adoption has been constrained due to institutional and regulatory barriers. Previous proposals, such as SB 918 (Pavley, 2010) and SB 322 (Hueso, 2013), have focused largely on developing regulations governing alternate drinking water sources. Nonetheless, exposure to pathogens in

non-potable water can still pose health risks if not treated and monitored correctly.

#### PROBLEM

As water scarcity in California becomes an increasingly pressing issue, onsite water reuse can relieve overburdened water districts and reduce the need for costly piping and plant upgrades. However, local jurisdictions generally lack guidance on the appropriate water quality standards for the use of treated alternate water sources and the regulatory structures necessary to develop an oversight and management program.

#### SOLUTION

SB 966 directs SWRCB to develop risk-based water quality standards for the onsite treatment and use of non-potable water for non-potable end uses for use by local jurisdictions when regulating onsite non-potable water systems. The risk-based standards address the potential health risks associated with treated non-potable water. A recent report – *Risk-Based Framework for the Development of Public Health Guidance for Decentralized Non-Potable Water Systems* (WERF Project No. SIWM10C15) – lays the foundation for creating these standards. Should local jurisdictions decide to permit onsite non-potable water systems, attainment of health risk-based water quality standards would be required in all systems installed.

SWRCB will develop the framework in consultation with the California Building Standards Commission. Passage of SB 966 will ensure that innovators can develop technologies that meet a uniform standard and that local jurisdictions can permit onsite water reuse with the assurance that public health will be protected.

## **STATUS**

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- Pending referral

## **SUPPORT**

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- San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (Sponsor)
- U.S. Green Building Council

## **CO-AUTHORS**

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- Assemblymember Cristina Garcia
- Assemblymember Blanca Rubio

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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