

# AMWA backs legislation to enhance water utility preparedness

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New legislation introduced in the House and Senate last week would establish a targeted EPA program that would encourage more water and wastewater systems to participate in WaterISAC - thereby enhancing all-hazards preparedness across the water sector.

Sponsored by Sen. Ed Markey (D-Mass.) and Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.), the Water System Threat Preparedness and Resilience Act ([S. 660](https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/660) (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/660>)/[H.R. 1367](https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/1367) (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/1367>)) would authorize a targeted EPA program that would encourage eligible entities to participate in WaterISAC. As part of the program, EPA would take steps to “encourage, support, and maintain” the participation of water and wastewater systems in WaterISAC, including by offering to offset costs incurred by some water systems to maintain maintaining or initiating WaterISAC memberships and cooperating with WaterISAC on incident data collection and analysis of threats to the water sector.

[WaterISAC](http://www.waterisac.org/) (<http://www.waterisac.org/>) collects, analyzes, and disseminates actionable threat information to member drinking water and wastewater systems

while also offering guidance on risk mitigation tools, best practices, and response actions that contribute to an all-hazards resiliency posture. It is one of more than two-dozen sector-specific ISACs operating today, but as an independent non-profit organization, WaterISAC receives no state or federal grant funding and therefore operates as a dues-based subscription service. Currently, only about 400 water and wastewater systems nationwide are able to access all of WaterISAC's resources and services, so the new legislation would aim to increase that number.

In a [statement](#)

(<https://www.markey.senate.gov/news/press-releases/senator-markey-congresswoman-schakowsky-introduce-legislation-to-help-protect-clean-water-and-wastewater-utilities>), Sen. Markey called WaterISAC “a critical tool to help water utilities of all sizes share information, best practices, and response techniques.”

Earlier this month AMWA led four other major drinking water and wastewater associations in [writing](#) (<https://www.amwa.net/letter/letter-support-water-system-threat-preparedness-and-resilience-act>) to Sen. Markey and Rep. Schakowsky in support of the new legislation, and the organizations will work to build support for the measure. The proposal is based on an Energy Department program authorized in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that seeks to increase electric utility participation in that sector's ISAC.

[Back to March 13, 2023](#)

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