



**Water Utility
2024 – 2025 Request for Qualifications (RFQ)
Updated to Include BABA Requirements and Davis-Bacon Wage Rates
Licensed Plumbers/Utility Contractors Interested in Participating
in the Private-Side Lead Service Line Replacement Program**

This RFQ is valid for the 2024 through 2025 calendar years Financial Assistance for Private-Side Lead Service Line Replacement program.

Program Background

The City of Oshkosh Water Utility (City) is seeking qualifications from licensed plumbers/utility contractors who are interested in performing private-side lead service line replacement (LSLR) work. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) has made funds available through the Safe Drinking Water Loan Program and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (SDWLP/BIL) to municipalities to help offset the cost of replacing the privately-owned portions of lead water service lines. Only licensed plumbers/utility contractors providing appropriate responses to this RFQ will be placed on a list of Pre-Qualified Contractors to perform the LSLR work. The City encourages Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE's), including Minority Business Enterprises (MBE's) and Women's Business Enterprises (WBE's), to pre-qualify for the purpose of being included in the Project.

Property Approval Required Prior To the Start of Work

Properties must be approved prior to work commencing on the private-side LSLR. This will ensure that Federal requirements for the Endangered Species, Archeological/Historical, and Waterway/Wetland Reviews are completed as part of this process. Many of the LSLRs will be completed in conjunction with the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). For properties within the City's CIP, the City is working with the WDNR to have the required reviews done prior to construction to expedite the approval process.

Any approval issued prior to August 8, 2024 are not valid. Property owners will be sent letters from the City with the WDNR conditions of approval notifying them of their eligibility to participate in the LSLR Program. Contractors will know whether the property has been approved by the City when the property owner produces the approval letter from the City. The City will also provide a weekly update of approved addresses to pre-qualified contractors via e-mail.

If the property is eligible for financial assistance, owners of properties will be able to contract directly with a licensed plumber/utility contractor on the list of Pre-Qualified Contractors. Once the work is completed, eligible costs up to \$5,400 will be directly paid by the City to the Contractor. Property owners are encouraged to enter into a loan agreement with the City to repay half of the cost.

Please note: New this year, public- and private-side LSLR should be completed within 90 days of either side becoming lead free and must be done within 180 days of either side becoming lead free. Failure to complete the LSLR within 180 days will result in the property not being eligible for financial assistance.

Coordination and cooperation between the City's Project contractor and the LSLR Contractors will be critical.

Partial replacements completed **prior to August 8, 2024** do not have the 180-day requirement. **Property owners wishing to do LSLR in these instances still need to be approved for financial assistance eligibility and must have received confirmation of approval from the City, prior to conducting the LSLR. The approval packet may contain additional conditions that must be followed to ensure eligibility. Failure to receive approval from the City prior to starting LSLR may result in the City not providing financial assistance.**

If the LSLR will be performed after the completion of the City's CIP contracts, the City will make every effort to extend the newly-constructed water services approximately five feet (5') beyond the right-of-way and reconnect to the existing private-side lead water service at that point. As part of the City construction projects, concrete driveway approaches and portions of the concrete walk may be replaced. The terrace areas and any disturbed lawn area behind the sidewalk will be re-graded, fertilized, seeded, and mulched.

Engineering Division staff will complete a post-construction walk-through of the newly-constructed streets and will note any defects relating to the work performed by the City's contractor. These defects will be given to the general contractor in the form of a punch list for them to correct.

Where water services were extended beyond the right-of-way, the City does not anticipate any damage to occur to the newly-constructed sidewalk or driveway approaches when the LSLR Contractor performs the private-side LSLR. At locations where the water service could not be extended beyond the right-of-way, the LSLR Contractor may need to take greater care not to damage the completed City work. Any damage to the newly-constructed utilities, street, sidewalk, or driveway approaches are the responsibility of the LSLR Contractor to repair at no cost to the City.

Due to the nature of construction activities that will need to take place while completing the private-side LSLR, we do anticipate the LSLR Contractor may disturb small portions of the newly-seeded areas where the connection to the new water service is located. These areas must be restored to a condition similar to that existing prior to starting the work. This may require the

LSLR Contractor to re-grade the disturbed areas and re-seed, fertilize, and mulch. They may even need to remove and replace sections of concrete or asphalt pavement. The cost for these activities should be incorporated into the bid price of the private-side LSLR.

Program Funding Requirements

Based on SDWLP/BIL LSLR project requirements, the City may pay for eligible costs when a property owner contracts directly with a Pre-Qualified LSLR Contractor. To comply with the SDWLP/BIL, the City requires the Pre-Qualified LSLR Contractors perform the work in accordance with the following:

1. **Properties must be approved to ensure eligibility for the financial assistance due to Federal funding requirements of the program. Work performed prior to approval may not be eligible for financial assistance. Some properties may not qualify for financial assistance, the review process may take additional time, and/or some properties may have additional conditions placed upon the property.**
2. Work to be performed by a licensed plumber under **Section SPS 305.90**, Wis. Adm. Code, or utility contractor under **Section SPS 305.91**, Wis. Adm. Code.
3. Work to be performed in accordance with the plumbing code requirements found in **Sections SPS 381 – 387**, Wis. Adm. Code.
4. All work for electrical grounding shall conform to **NEC Section 250**, Wis. Adm. Code **Section SPS 316.250**, and any other applicable codes. **LSLR Contractor shall coordinate with a licensed electrician to verify electrical service is grounded per NEC code prior to replacing lead water service line. An electrical permit is required if grounding of electrical service needs to be done. This work will need to be completed before payment for the LSLR will be made.**
5. Work to be performed in accordance with all applicable OSHA requirements/standards.
6. Adequate financial records shall be established and maintained in accordance with the **Municipal SDWLP Financial Assistance Agreement**. Adequate financial records shall include property address; water service line replacement location, material, size, and length; and material and labor costs.
7. Once the work is completed, the LSLR Contractor shall make arrangements for a final inspection with the City's Inspection Services Division.
8. The City is required to certify that the LSLR Contractors performing LSLR work will comply with the **Use of American Iron and Steel Provisions** of P.L. 114-113 Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016.
 - This requirement means that, if the current private-side lead water service is replaced with a galvanized iron water service, additional information will be required from the LSLR Contractor to document the source of the galvanized iron in order to maintain the property owner's eligibility for financial assistance. **The City highly recommends that the lead water services are not replaced with a galvanized iron water service.**
9. **New this year**, the City is required to certify that the LSLR contractors performing LSLR work will comply with the **Build America, Buy America (BABA)** requirements of **Title IX** of the **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Public Law No. 117-58 § 70901-52**. Attached to this RFQ is a memorandum from the EPA with the subject "Build America, Buy America Act Implementation Procedures for EPA Office of Water Federal Financial Assistance Programs".

This document provides direction to contractors to meet BABA requirements, including examples of classification of various materials. The City highly recommends you work with your suppliers to obtain BABA compliance certifications.

All BABA-covered items must be tracked by the Contractor. Below is a summary of BABA-covered items. Up to five percent (5%) of the total Project cost is allowed to be non-BABA compliant. The City will provide a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to all LSLR contractors to use to track the BABA and de minimis amounts.

BABA-covered items include Iron and Steel, Manufactured Products, and Construction Materials, unless excluded. Items should only be classified into one (1) of the three (3) categories. BABA applies to items consumed in, incorporated into, or affixed to a LSLR replacement (aka permanently incorporated). It does not apply to items brought to and removed from the construction site prior to completing the LSLR. Following is a summary of BABA compliance guidance for each category:

- **Iron and Steel**

- i. Items that are predominantly iron or steel, unless another standard applies under law or regulation.
- ii. To comply, all manufacturing processes, from the initial melting stage through the application of coatings, must occur in the United States.

- **Manufactured Products**

- i. Manufactured in the United States.
- ii. To comply, cost of components that are mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States must be greater than fifty-five percent (55%) of the total cost of all components of the manufactured product.

- **Construction Materials**

- i. Includes:
 - 1. Non-ferrous metals.
 - 2. Plastic and polymer-based products.
 - 3. Glass.
 - 4. Lumber.
 - 5. Drywall.
- ii. Excludes:
 - 1. Items made primarily of Iron or Steel (must comply with above guidance).
 - 2. Manufactured Products (must comply with above guidance).
 - 3. Cement and cementitious materials.
 - 4. Aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel.
 - 5. Aggregate binding agents/additives.
- iii. To comply, all manufacturing processes must occur in the United States.

10. Both the private side and public side of the water service will need to be lead-free prior to the City paying the LSLR Contractor.

Davis-Bacon Wage Rate Requirements

Funding for private-side lead water service line replacement is being provided by the SDWLP/BIL. Therefore, in most cases, Federal Davis-Bacon wage rate requirements will apply to the LSLR Contractor and all subcontractor(s) performing this work.

Please note the changes below as to when the Davis-Bacon Wage Rate requirements will apply for projects where the homeowner contracts directly with a plumber or contractor from a pre-qualified list.

The Federal Davis-Bacon wage rate requirements will apply under the following conditions:

- The property is owned by an individual or individuals or is in the name of a business.
- The work will be performed using a LSLR Contractor and/or subcontractor(s) that have employees (who are not at least twenty percent (20%) owners of those firms); and an owner of that LSLR Contractor and/or subcontractor(s) did not perform one hundred percent (100%) of the work.

Davis-Bacon wage rate requirements will not apply in the following circumstances:

- An employee who is at least a twenty percent (20%) owner of the LSLR Contractor and/or subcontractor(s) completing the work completes one hundred percent (100%) of the work.
- The total cost of the LSL replacement is less than two thousand dollars (\$2,000).

The City will assist in determining whether or not the Davis-Bacon wage rate requirements apply.

The LSLR contractor and subcontractor(s) must obtain a copy of the Davis-Bacon wage rate determination that is in effect when they sign the contract for the work that requires compliance with the Davis-Bacon wage rates, which must be submitted to the City with the financial assistance application form. Please contact the City to receive the current Davis-Bacon wage rate determination.

The City will e-mail the Davis-Bacon wage rates determination to all pre-qualified LSLR contractors and their subcontractors as they are updated.

The LSLR Contractor and subcontractor(s) must also provide a certified payroll to the City with the financial assistance application form. Please contact the City to get the required certified payroll form.

Summary of Significant Changes From Past Years

- **To be eligible for financial assistance both the public-side and private-side must be lead free and completed within one hundred eighty (180) days of each other. Partial replacements completed prior to August 8, 2024 are exempt from the 180-day requirement.**
- **All approved properties will get approval letters from City!**

- The program no longer will reimburse property owners. City will pay LSLR Contractors directly, up to \$5,400, provided all conditions are met. Costs above this must be paid by the property owner to the LSLR Contractor. The new program requires the property owner to enter into a loan agreement with the City. Property owners will be provided a draft copy of the loan document and a sample schedule of payments at the time they are approved.
- LSLR Contractors will submit payment application (property owner must also sign) along with detailed invoice and BABA compliance documentation. Upon receipt of the payment application and the other required documentation, the City will schedule a closing date with the property owner to complete the loan process. Once the closing has been held, the City will then pay the Contractor.
 - See Item 6 above for the required items to be included on the invoice. Only LSLR-related expenses can be included on the invoice. Including non-LSLR related expenses on the invoice will, at a minimum, delay payment and will likely require paperwork to be redone.
 - Contractor must submit BABA-tracking spreadsheet paperwork with each payment application. All Subcontractors listed must also have their BABA-tracking spreadsheet attached. The total of non-BABA compliant materials shall be no more than five percent (5%). The spreadsheet calculates the percentage. A paper copy is attached for reference.
 - If Contractor prefers, they may also submit the documentation received from their suppliers confirming BABA-compliant materials with the BABA-tracking spreadsheet. Submitting this information to the City may result in the Contractor not being contacted by the City or the EPA's auditor if the City's LSLR Program is audited by the EPA.
- Limited financial assistance is available for those who qualify through HUD as very low income. This program will be through the City's Department of Community Development and will utilize Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. This financial assistance must be applied for through the City's Department of Community Development. The property owner must use a current Pre-Qualified LSLR Contractor and follow all CDBG rules.



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Minimum RFQ Information Requirements

Licensed plumbers/utility contractors interested in performing LSLR work funded by SDWLP/BIL should submit a response to this RFQ by including, at a minimum, the following information:

Name of plumbing/contracting business

Name of plumbing/contractor business owner or registered agent

Address	City	State	Zip
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Phone	Fax	email
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Plumbing/contractor license number

Number of years licensed

Number of years in business

Briefly describe your plumbing/contractor organization, size, and structure:

In order to assist with determining whether the Federal Davis-Bacon wage requirements apply, please list the number of employees in your firm, **including owners**:

How many of these employees are owners **of at least 20%** of your firm?

Provide the number of years your firm has been engaged in performing LSLR work:

How many new water service line installations and water service line replacements has your plumbing/utility contracting business performed in the last three (3) years?

New

Replacements

Is your Company a certified DBE, WBE, or MBE company? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Other qualifying information that would be helpful for this Program:

Approval of each individual property by the WDNR and the City for LSLR work is required to ensure eligibility for program financial assistance prior to commencement of LSLR work. All property owners will receive an approval package from the City.

Signature of Officer/Owner of the business:

Return completed RFQ via mail or email to:

Tracy Taylor
Department of Public Works
City of Oshkosh
PO Box 1130
Oshkosh, WI 54903-1130
E-Mail: ttaylor@oshkoshwi.gov

APPROVED BY:

Director of Public Works

Date



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF WATER

November 3, 2022

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Build America, Buy America Act Implementation Procedures for EPA Office of Water
Federal Financial Assistance Programs

FROM: Radhika Fox
Assistant Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "R. Fox", is placed to the right of the "FROM:" line.

TO: EPA Regional Water Division Directors, Regions I – X
EPA Office of Water Office Directors

OVERVIEW

The Biden-Harris Administration recognized the Nation's critical need for infrastructure investment, championing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), which Congress passed on November 15, 2021 (also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)). The BIL will provide an unprecedented level of federal investment in water and wastewater infrastructure in communities across America.

In Title IX of the IIJA, Congress passed the Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act, which establishes strong and permanent domestic sourcing requirements across all Federal financial assistance programs for infrastructure. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Water is honored to help lead the implementation of these provisions and is proud of its near decade of successful implementation of the American Iron and Steel (AIS) provisions for its flagship water infrastructure programs.

This is a transformational opportunity to build a resilient supply chain and manufacturing base for critical products here in the United States that will spur investment in good-paying American manufacturing jobs and businesses. EPA's efforts to implement BABA will help cultivate the domestic manufacturing base for a wide range of products commonly used across the water sector but not currently made domestically. This will take time, and flexibility will be important to ensure that EPA can leverage critical water investments on time and on budget to protect public health and improve water quality.

IMPLEMENTATION

Recognizing the opportunity and need for BABA implementation guidance, the Made in America Office (MIAO) of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published [Initial Implementation Guidance on Application of Buy America Preference in Federal Financial Assistance Programs for Infrastructure](#) (OMB Guidance M-22-11) on April 18, 2022. The guidance provides government-wide implementation direction for all Federal financial assistance programs for infrastructure. Despite the extensive guidance developed by MIAO, EPA's Office of Water infrastructure investment programs have received many questions that were not addressed in OMB Guidance M-22-11 or that require further clarification for EPA water infrastructure programs. The following questions and answers serve to supplement OMB Guidance M-22-11 with implementation procedures specific to EPA's relevant water infrastructure programs.

Section 70914(a) of the IIJA states when a Buy America preference under BABA applies: "Not later than... [May 14, 2022], the head of each Federal agency shall ensure that none of the funds made available for a Federal financial assistance program for infrastructure... may be obligated for a project unless all of the iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in the project are produced in the United States." Therefore, Federal financial infrastructure investments obligated on or after May 14, 2022, must comply with the BABA requirements. Absent a waiver, all iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials permanently incorporated into an infrastructure project subject to the BABA requirements must be produced in the United States. For many of EPA's Office of Water infrastructure investment programs, the vast majority of products permanently incorporated into construction, maintenance, or repair projects must comply with the BABA requirements, with the exception of select construction materials (cement and cementitious materials; aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel; or aggregate binding agents or additives), which are specifically excepted by the BABA statute.

EPA's Office of Water implements many infrastructure investment programs subject to BABA requirements, including the following:

- Alaska Native Villages and Rural Communities Water Grant Program (ANV) (and any associated Interagency Agreements with the Indian Health Service)
- Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Programs (CW and DWSRF)
- Clean Water and Drinking Water Grants to U.S. Territories and the District of Columbia
- Clean Water Indian and Drinking Water Tribal Infrastructure Grant Set-aside (and any associated Interagency Agreements with the Indian Health Service)
- Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act, (CWPPRA) Programs
- Congressionally Directed Spending/Community Project Funding (also known as Community Grants)
- Geographic Programs¹
- Gulf Hypoxia Program
- National Estuaries Program (CWA Section 320)

¹ Geographic Programs include: Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, Chesapeake Bay, San Francisco Bay, Puget Sound, Long Island Sound, Gulf of Mexico, South Florida, Lake Champlain, Lake Pontchartrain, Southern New England Estuaries, Columbia River Basin, Pacific Northwest

- 319 Nonpoint Source Management Program Implementation
- Reducing Lead in Drinking Water Grant Program (SDWA §1459B)
- Assistance for Small and Disadvantaged Communities Grants: Small, Underserved, and Disadvantaged Community Grant Program (SUDC), Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities (EC-SDC) and Drinking Water Infrastructure Resilience & Sustainability (SDWA §1459A)
- Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grants (OSG)
- USMCA Implementing Legislation (Section 821 and Title IX, USMCA Supplemental Appropriations, 2020)
- U.S.-Mexico Border Water Infrastructure Program
- Voluntary School and Child Care Program Lead Testing and Remediation Grant Program (SDWA 1464(d))
- Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA)

The questions and answers in this document apply to the implementation of BABA requirements for the Office of Water infrastructure programs listed above unless superseded by regulation, statute, or other applicable guidance. For many of the programs listed above which did not have domestic preference requirements prior to BABA, additional implementation details are pending or may be developed after the issuance of these procedures. In addition, EPA notes that more direction will be helpful to inform the determination and definition of domestic content in manufactured goods. Supplemental guidance on these and other issues, from either OMB or EPA, may be forthcoming. These implementation procedures may also apply to additional, unlisted EPA programs which may be required to apply BABA subsequent to publication of this memorandum (e.g., future funding programs which have been authorized, but not yet appropriated).

For more information on the BABA requirements, visit the EPA Office of Water’s dedicated website – <https://www.epa.gov/cwsrf/build-america-buy-america-baba> – or contact your funding authority (such as your grants officer, portfolio manager, or state contact). For information on approved waivers, visit <https://www.epa.gov/cwsrf/build-america-buy-america-baba-approved-waivers>. You may also email questions to BABA-OW@epa.gov.

This Implementation Procedures document is organized to provide responses to questions in the following topic areas:

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

SECTION 1: GENERAL

- Q1.1: Will EPA provide documentation for BABA for bid solicitations and suggested contract language? Will EPA provide suggested language for Assistance Agreements?
 - A1.1: See Appendix 1, which includes suggested language for construction contracts which addresses the BABA requirements. In addition to the language suggested in Appendix 1, EPA also recommends that assistance recipients prepare contract bid solicitation documents with a statement for the consulting engineers and construction firms as follows: “By signing payment application and recommending payment, Contractor certifies they have reviewed documentation for all products and materials submitted for payment, and the certifications are sufficient to demonstrate compliance with Build America, Buy America Act requirements.” In most cases, the assistance recipient’s representatives assume the responsibility for their clients to conduct due diligence on compliance with applicable domestic preference requirements.

All Federal Financial infrastructure assistance agreements subject to BABA must have a clause requiring compliance with the requirements. See Appendix 2 for example assistance agreement language.

- Q1.2: Would federally-financed infrastructure projects outside of the United States need to comply with the BABA requirements?
 - A1.2: No. According to the OMB Guidance (M-22-11), a “project” is defined as “...any activity related to the construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of infrastructure in the United States.” Therefore, the BABA requirements are not implicated for infrastructure projects occurring outside of the United States, such as projects funded through the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement with infrastructure activities occurring in Mexico or Canada (that is, outside the United States).
 -
- Q1.3: If most of the project is BABA compliant, and a small portion is not, can an assistance recipient self-fund (i.e., paying with non-federal dollars) the non-compliant products?
 - A1.3: Any project that is funded in whole or in part with federal assistance must comply with the BABA requirements, unless the requirements are otherwise waived. All iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in a project must meet the BABA requirements unless waived. Absent a waiver, there is no “small portion” or product that does not need to satisfy the BABA requirements unless the requirements are waived (or specifically excluded as is the case for cement and cementitious materials; aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel; aggregate binding agents or additives; or non-permanent products). An assistance recipient may request a waiver or inquire as to whether a broad waiver, such as a *de minimis* waiver, might apply.

- Q1.4: How do international trade agreements affect the implementation of the BABA requirements?
 - A1.4: The BABA requirements apply in a manner consistent with United States obligations under international trade agreements. Typically, these obligations only apply to direct procurement by the entities that are signatories to these trade agreements. In general, assistance recipients are not signatories to such agreements, so these trade agreements have no impact on BABA implementation. In the few instances where such an agreement applies to a municipality, that municipality is responsible for determining its applicability and requirements and communicating with the funding authority (such as EPA and/or a state) on the actions taken to comply with BABA.

SECTION 2: PRODUCT COVERAGE

- Q2.1: For products made of iron and steel, what is the difference between predominantly and primarily iron and steel?
 - A2.1: EPA considers the terms “predominantly” and “primarily” to be interchangeable, such that a product is considered predominantly (or primarily) iron and steel if it contains greater than 50 percent iron and steel by material cost.
- Q2.2: What is the definition of construction materials (with examples)?
 - A2.2: From OMB Guidance M-22-11: “construction materials” include an article, material, or supply (other than an item of primarily iron or steel; a manufactured product; cement and cementitious materials; aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel; aggregate binding agents or additives; or non-permanent products) that is or consists primarily of:
 - non-ferrous metals,
 - plastic and polymer-based products (including polyvinylchloride, composite building materials, and polymers used in fiber optic cables), (including optic glass),
 - lumber, and
 - drywall.

For example, a plate of glass would be a construction material under BABA, but a framed window that incorporates the glass into a frame would be a manufactured product. Another common construction material for water infrastructure projects would be polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipe and fittings. However, if PVC components are incorporated into a more complex product such as instrumentation and control equipment or a water treatment unit, those items would be manufactured products.

- Q2.3: What are manufactured products (with examples)?
 - A2.3: From OMB Guidance M-22-11: “...all manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States—this means the manufactured product was manufactured in the United States; and the cost of the components of the manufactured product that are mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States is greater than 55 percent of the total

cost of all components of the manufactured product, unless another standard for determining the minimum amount of domestic content of the manufactured product has been established under applicable law or regulation...”

The manufactured products category would cover the majority of potential water infrastructure products, including complex products made up of a variety of material types and components. For water infrastructure projects, common manufactured products would include, but not be limited to, pumps, motors, blowers, aerators, generators, instrumentation and control systems, gauges, meters, measurement equipment, treatment equipment, dewatering equipment, actuators, and many other mechanical and electrical items.

- Q2.4: Which category will valves fall under for BABA? Will it differ from the American Iron and Steel (AIS) requirements?
 - A2.4: For programs that are subject to BABA and AIS (SRF, WIFIA, and Community Project Funding), projects using valves should classify them as iron and steel products under BABA as long as their material cost is made up of more than 50 percent iron and/or steel. Valves with 50 percent or less iron and/or steel by material cost would be considered manufactured products under the BABA requirements.

In accordance with OMB Guidance M-22-11, an article, material, or supply should be classified into only one of the three categories: iron and steel, manufactured products, or construction materials. Under the AIS requirements, all valves made primarily of iron and steel (that is, those with iron and/or steel material cost greater than 50 percent) must comply with the AIS requirements. For BABA, EPA interprets Section IV of OMB Guidance M-22-11 to mean that iron and steel products are those items that are primarily iron and steel, the same as for the AIS requirements.

- Q2.5: Does EPA have a list of products to be classified as “Iron and Steel” under BABA?
 - A2.5: Although this list is not comprehensive, the following products were classified as AIS products if made primarily (more than 50 percent) of iron and/or steel by materials cost (for programs subject to both AIS and BABA, this list would be equivalent for “iron and steel” items or products under either requirement):

Products likely made “primarily” of iron and steel to be classified as <u>Iron and Steel</u> under BABA		
Lined and Unlined Pipe	Lined and Unlined Fittings	Tanks
Flanges	Pipe Clamps and Restraints	Structural Steel
Valves	Hydrants	Pre-Cast, Iron/Steel Reinforced Concrete (of all types, regardless of iron/steel content percentage)
Manhole Covers and other Municipal Castings	Access Hatches	Ballast Screens
Iron or Steel Benches	Bollards	Cast Bases
Cast Iron Hinged Hatches	Cast Iron Riser Rings	Catch Basin Inlets
Cleanout/Monument Boxes	Construction Covers and Frames	Curb and Corner Guards

Products likely made “primarily” of iron and steel to be classified as <u>Iron and Steel</u> under BABA		
Curb Boxes	Curb Openings	Curb Stops
Detectable Warning Plates	Downspout Shoes	Drainage Grates
Drainage Grate Frames and Curb Inlets	Inlets	Junction Boxes
Lampposts	Manhole Rings and Frames	Manhole Risers
Meter Boxes	Service Boxes	Steel Hinged Hatches
Steel Riser Rings	Trash Receptacles	Tree Grates
Tree Guards	Trench Grates	Valve Boxes
Valve Box Covers and Risers	Access Ramps	Aeration Pipes and Fittings (separate from aeration/blowers)
Angles	Backflow Preventers/Double Check Valves	Baffle Curtains
Iron or Steel Bar	Bathroom Stalls	Beam Clamps
Cable Hanging Systems	Clarifier Tanks	Coiled Steel
Column Piping	Concrete Reinforcing Bar, Wire, and Fibers	Condensate Sediment Traps
Corrugated Pipe	Couplings	Decking
Digester Covers	Dome Structures	Door Hardware
Doors	Ductwork	Expansion Joints
Expansion Tanks (diaphragm, surge, and hydropneumatics)	Fasteners	Fencing and Fence Tubing
Fire Escapes	Flanged Pipe	Flap Gates
Framing	Gate Valves	Generic Hanging Brackets
Grating	Ground Testing Boxes	Ground Test Wells
Guardrails	HVAC Registers, Diffusers, and Grilles	Joists
Knife Gates	Ladders	Lifting Hooks, J-bar, Connectors within, and Anchors for Concrete
Lockers	Man Baskets and Material Platforms	Manhole Steps
Mud Valves	Municipal Casting Junctions	Non-mechanical (aka stationary) Louvers and Dampers
Overhead Rolling Doors/ Uplifting Doors (manual open, no motor)	Pipe Connectors	Pipe Hangers
Pipe Pilings (any type of steel piling)	Pipe Spool (pipe, flanges, connectors, etc.)	Pipe Supports
Pitless Adaptors	Pre-fab Steel Buildings/Sheds (simple structure, unfurnished)	Pre-stressed Concrete Cylinder Pipe (PCCP)
Railings	Reduced Pressure Zone (RPZ) Valves	Roofing
Service Saddles	Sheet Piling	Sinks (not part of eyewash systems)
Solenoid Valves	Stairs	Static Mixers
Stationary Screens	Surface Drains	Tapping Sleeves
Telescoping Valves	Tipping Buckets	Trusses
Tubing	Valve Stem Extensions	Valve Stems (excluding handwheels and actuators)
Wall Panels	Wall Sleeves/Floor Sleeves	Welding Rods
Well Casing	Well Screens	Wire
Wire Cloth	Wire Rod	Wire Rope and Cables

Q2.6: Does EPA have a list of products that could be made “primarily” of iron and steel but would be classified as “manufactured products” under BABA?

A2.6: Although this list is not comprehensive, the following products would be considered “manufactured products” under the BABA requirements, even if the item might be composed primarily of iron and steel by materials cost (Note: These items are not subject to the AIS requirements.):

Products likely made “primarily” of iron and steel to be classified as <u>Manufactured Products</u> under BABA		
Actuator Superstructures/ Support Structures	Aeration Nozzles and Injectors	Aerators
Analytical Instrumentation	Analyzers (e.g., ozone, oxygen)	Automated Water Fill Stations
Blowers/Aeration Equipment	Boilers, Boiler Systems	Chemical Feed Systems (e.g., polymer, coagulant, treatment chemicals)
Chemical Injection Quills	Chemical Injectors	Clarifier Mechanisms/Arms
Compressors	Controls and Switches	Conveyors
Cranes	Desiccant Air Dryer Tanks	Dewatering Equipment
Dewatering Roll-offs	Disinfection Systems	Drives (e.g., variable frequency drives)
Electric/Pneumatic/Manual Accessories Used to Operate Valves (such as electric valve actuators)	Electrical Cabinetry and Housings (such as electrical boxes/enclosures)	Electrical Conduit
Electrical Junction Boxes	Electronic Door Locks	Elevator Systems (hydraulic, etc.,)
Emergency Life Systems (including eyewash stations, emergency safety showers, fire extinguishers, fire suppression systems including sprinklers /piping/valves, first aid, etc.)	Exhaust Fans	Fall Protection Anchor Points
Fiberglass Tank w/Appurtenances	Filters (and appurtenances, including underdrains, backwash systems)	Flocculators
Fluidized Bed Incinerators	Galvanized Anodes/Cathodic Protection	Gear Reducers
Generators	Geothermal Systems	Grinders
Heat Exchangers	HVAC (excluding ductwork)	HVAC Dampers (if appurtenances to aerators/blowers)
HVAC Louvers (mechanical)	Intake and Exhaust Grates (if appurtenances to aerators/blowers)	Instrumentation
Laboratory Equipment	Ladder Fall Prevention Systems	Ladder Safety Posts
Lighting Fixtures	Lightning and Grounding Rods	Mechanical or Actuated Louvers/Dampers
Membrane Bioreactor Systems	Membrane Filtration Systems	Metal Office Furniture (fixed)
Meters (including flow, wholesale, water, and service connection)	Motorized Doors (unit)	Motorized Mixers
Motorized Screens (such as traveling screens)	Motors	Pelton Wheels
Pipeline Flash Reactors (similar to injectors)	Plate Settlers	Precast Concrete without Iron/Steel Reinforcement

Products likely made “primarily” of iron and steel to be classified as <u>Manufactured Products</u> under BABA		
Furnished Pre-fab Buildings (such as furnished with pumps, mechanics inside)	Presses (including belt presses)	Pressure Gauges
Pump Cans/Barrels and Strainers	Pumps	Mechanical Rakes
Safety Climb Cable	Sampling Stations (unless also act as hydrant)	Scrubbers
Sensors	Sequencing Batch Reactors (SBR)	Steel Shelving (fixed)
Slide and Sluice Gates	Spray Header Units	Steel Cabinets (fixed interior/furniture)
Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) Systems	Tracer Wire	Valve Manual Gears, Actuators, Handles
Voltage Transformer	Water Electrostatic Precipitators (WESP)	Water Heaters
Weir Gates		

- Q2.7: Is asphalt paving a covered product under BABA?
 - A2.7: No. EPA interprets Section 70917(c) of the IIJA to exclude asphalt from BABA requirements. Asphalt paving is a type of concrete composed of an aggregate material mixed with a binder (bitumen). EPA considers asphalt concrete to be excluded by section 70917(c) due to its similarities with cement and cementitious materials.

SECTION 3: CO-FUNDING

- Q3.1: If projects are co-funded with funding mechanisms that don’t require BABA, must the entire project comply with BABA?
 - A3.1: Yes. Any project that is funded in whole or in part with federal assistance must comply with the BABA requirements, unless the requirements are otherwise waived. A “project” consists of all construction necessary to complete the building or work regardless of the number of contracts or assistance agreements involved so long as all the contracts and assistance agreements awarded are closely related in purpose, time, and place. This precludes the intentional splitting of projects into separate and smaller contracts or assistance agreements to avoid BABA’s applicability on some portions of a larger project, particularly where the activities are integrally and proximately related to the whole. However, there are many situations in which major construction activities are clearly undertaken in separate phases that are distinct in purpose, time, or place, in which case, separate contracts or assistance agreements would carry separate requirements.

- Q3.2: How will project requirements be determined for co-funded projects subject to potentially different general applicability/programmatic waiver conditions (such as different adjustment period waivers)?
 - A3.2: OMB Guidance M-22-11 addresses cases with project co-funding from separate programs. EPA would apply the guidance's "cognizant" program determination to projects that are co-funded with different general applicability/programmatic waivers. For instance, if a project were co-funded between WIFIA and SRF and the majority of the Federal funding for the project is from WIFIA, then WIFIA would be the "cognizant" program for application and determination of waivers. In that case, any conditions from an applicable WIFIA waiver would apply.

SECTION 4: WAIVERS

- Q4.1: Who may apply for a waiver and how do you apply?
 - A4.1: Assistance recipients and their authorized representatives may apply for a project-specific waiver. EPA does not accept waiver requests from suppliers, distributors, or manufacturers unless the assistance recipient endorses and submits the request on its own behalf to the funding authority. In the case where multiple programs are providing federal funds to the project, the assistance recipient should submit the waiver request to the cognizant program, the one providing the greatest amount of federal funds for the project. For information on applying for cost waivers, see questions 4.4 and 4.5. For information on the SRF program roles and responsibilities, see question 7.6.

Project-specific waiver requests should generally include: (1) a brief summary of the project, (2) a description and explanation of the need for the waiver for the product(s) in question, (3) a brief summary of the due diligence conducted in search of domestic alternatives (which could include correspondence between assistance recipient and supplier/distributors), (4) the quantity and materials of the product(s) in question, (5) all engineering specifications and project design considerations relevant to the product(s) in question, (6) the approximate unit cost of items (both foreign and domestic) in addition to an estimated cost of the materials and overall project, (7) the date any products will be needed on site in order to avoid significant project schedule disruptions, and (8) any other pertinent information relevant to EPA's consideration of the waiver (e.g., if relevant for SRF projects: whether the project is designated as an equivalency project, the date the plans and specifications were submitted to the state, the date of construction initiation, expected date of project completion, any special considerations such as local zoning and building ordinances, seismic requirements, or noise or odor control requirements).

In the case of indirect federal assistance, such as the SRF programs, the state authority reviews and conveys the waiver request to EPA. States should submit waiver requests to the appropriate program waiver request inbox. For SRF projects, please use CWSRFWaiver@epa.gov or DWSRFWaiver@epa.gov.

- Q4.2: Can an assistance recipient request a waiver based on a specification written for a specific brand or model of product (that is, a specification that names a branded item or model)?
 - A4.2: In most cases, performance-based specifications are expected and required for the majority of infrastructure projects funded by EPA's financial assistance programs. In rare cases where "branded" or product-specific sourcing may be included in project specifications, it is suggested that the specifications include the item in question (that is, not simply a catalog page, but also materials of construction, sizing, quantities, and applicable engineering performance design characteristics for the project, etc.) in addition to the standard phrase "or equal." For the purposes of product alternative market research, EPA will evaluate the BABA requirements based on performance-based engineering specifications for the product(s) in question. If the project's specifications do not include performance-based specifications, or at least an "or equal" designation, EPA will base its research on an "or equal" designation using best professional judgment to the extent practicable.
- Q4.3: If a manufactured product is not readily available domestically, will EPA provide short-term "limited availability" product waivers?
 - A4.3: EPA will address the unavailability of domestic products through the waiver process, including potential national short-term waivers for specific products, if appropriate. To the extent practicable and with the intent to maximize domestic market and supply chain development, EPA intends to address issues of broad product unavailability with targeted, time-limited, and conditional waivers, as prescribed in OMB Guidance M-22-11. EPA will follow its robust and thorough product research processes (those put into place for the AIS requirements for the SRF and WIFIA programs and expanded for the new BABA requirements) to identify and determine those products for which proposed national/general applicability waivers may be appropriate.
- Q4.4: What information is needed when applying for a cost waiver under BABA?
 - A4.4: As part of the cost waiver request, the assistance recipient must demonstrate that implementation of the BABA requirements will increase the overall project cost more than 25 percent. Depending on the circumstances of the overall project cost increases, documentation to justify the cost waiver can vary but may include itemized cost estimates or bid tabulations comparing project costs with and without BABA implementation. Assistance recipients should begin assessing the potential cost impacts of the BABA requirements during the design phase of a project.
- Q4.5: Can administrative costs associated with tracking and verification of certifications be considered when determining if the cost of a project increases by 25 percent or more?
 - A4.5: Yes. Section 70914(b)(3) of the IIJA states that a waiver may be provided if the overall cost of the project increases by more than 25 percent due to the "inclusion of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials produced in the United States." EPA interprets this to mean that the "inclusion" of the BABA-covered products could encompass

reasonable administrative costs associated with complying with the BABA requirements, such as staff, contractor, and technological resources to collect and track BABA compliance documentation.

- Q4.6: How can assistance recipients and construction contractors address product delivery delays?
 - A4.6: Assistance recipients should reasonably plan for material procurement to account for known potential supply chain issues or extended lead times and shall notify the funding authority well in advance of the issues so that prompt attention can be given to explore options. Where extended lead times for compliant products are impacting project schedules and may significantly impact construction progress, timely communication with the funding agency is important. For products that are unavailable within a reasonable timeframe to meet the objectives and schedule of a project, EPA may consider a non-availability waiver with adequate justification. An assistance recipient would need to apply for the waiver and contact its funding authority (such as EPA and/or a state) to initiate the waiver process.

SECTION 5: DOCUMENTING COMPLIANCE

- Q5.1: Who will be responsible for BABA enforcement?
 - A5.1: Responsibility for BABA implementation applies at all levels, from manufacturers to suppliers and distributors, construction contractors, assistance recipients, and funding authorities.

The manufacturers have responsibility to provide adequate and accurate documentation of the products manufactured. If suppliers and distributors are involved, they are responsible for passing along compliance documentation for products supplied to projects that are subject to the BABA requirements.

The assistance recipient and their representatives are primarily responsible for ensuring the documentation collected for products used on the project is sufficient to document compliance with the BABA requirements.

The funding authority is responsible for providing oversight and guidance as needed to ensure the proper implementation of the requirements. The Uniform Grants Guidance (UGG) (Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 200) applies to many Federal financial assistance agreements that will include BABA requirements. The general provisions of 2 CFR Part 200 determine the responsible party for the grant funding authority.

For information on SRF program roles and responsibilities, see question 7.6.

At all levels, where fraud, waste, abuse, or any violation of the law is suspected, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) should be contacted immediately. The OIG can be reached at 1-888-546-8740 or [OIG Hotline@epa.gov](mailto:OIG_Hotline@epa.gov). More information can be found at this website: <http://www.epa.gov/oig/hotline.htm>.

- Q5.2: When will the BABA requirements be assessed for compliance? Do assistance recipients need to have waivers for potential non-domestic products before assistance agreements are in place, at the time products are procured or products are incorporated into the project (i.e., used)?
 - A5.2: Compliance is assessed where the domestic product is used (or installed) at the project site. Proper compliance documentation, whether it is a BABA certification letter or a waiver, should accompany a product prior to its “use”, in accordance with Section 70914(a) of IIJA. This may occur prior to assistance agreements being in place but is not necessary. Additionally, communication of BABA requirements through appropriate Terms and Conditions in financial assistance agreements and in project solicitation and contract documents is key in ensuring all parties involved are informed of the requirements for the project before construction is underway.
- Q5.3: How can product compliance with the BABA requirements be demonstrated?
 - A5.3: Assistance recipients and their representatives should ensure that the products delivered to the construction site are accompanied by proper documentation that demonstrate compliance with the law and be made available to the funding authority upon request. The documentation may be received and maintained in hard copy, electronically, or could be embedded in construction management software. The use of a signed certification letter for the project is the most direct and effective form of compliance documentation for ensuring products used on site are BABA-compliant prior to their installation; however, other forms of documentation are also acceptable as long as collectively, the following can be demonstrated:
 - (1) Documentation linked to the project. For example, this can be in the form of the project name, project location, contract number, or project number.
 - (2) Documentation linked to the product used on the project. For example, description of product(s) (simple explanation sufficient to identify the product(s)), or an attached (or electronic link to) purchase order, invoice, or bill of lading.
 - (3) Documentation includes statement attesting that the products supplied to the assistance recipient are compliant with BABA requirement. Reference to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”) or the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) are also acceptable. For iron and steel items under BABA, references to the American Iron and Steel (AIS) requirements are also acceptable and reciprocal with BABA for such items.
 - (4) Documentation that manufacturing occurred in the United States, which could include, for example, the location(s) of manufacturing for each manufacturing step that is being certified. It is acceptable for manufactured products to note a single point of manufacturing, documenting that the final point of manufacturing is in the United States. Note that each BABA category may require different determinations for compliance.
 - (5) Signature of company representative (on company letterhead and signature can be electronic). The signatory of the certifying statement affirms their knowledge of the manufacturing processes for the referenced product(s) and attests that the product meets the BABA requirements.

In addition to compliance documentation, assistance recipients or their representatives should also conduct a visual inspection of the product when it arrives to the project site, especially for iron and steel products which are often stamped with the country of origin. (Note: A country of origin stamp alone is not sufficient verification of compliance with BABA and assistance receipts should not rely on it to ensure compliance.)

EPA may develop alternative procedures for demonstrating compliance. Additional project- or program-specific instructions may be developed on a case-by-case basis in order to meet individual circumstances.

- Q5.4: Will EPA provide a form or template for tracking and documenting compliance?
 - A5.4: EPA does not require a specified format for tracking or documenting compliance. Assistance recipients are free to develop any system (from simple to complex software) for tracking items used on the project and the accompanying compliance documentation, e.g., certification letters, applicable waivers, if it helps with implementation and compliance. Elements that may help with keeping track of compliance may include: product description, quantity required/used, product category (i.e., iron and steel, manufactured product, or construction material), status of obtaining certification letter, product cost, and whether the item might qualify as *de minimis*, or qualify under another applicable waiver.
- Q5.5: If a manufacturer claims to comply with the Buy American Act, does it also comply with BABA?
 - A5.5: No. With the exception of the AIS requirements – which EPA interprets to be equivalent to the “iron and steel” requirements under BABA – EPA does not have an interpretation about the comparability of other domestic preference requirements relative to BABA. Any products that are to be certified as compliant with BABA should include a specific reference to the BABA requirements and appropriate attestation from a responsible manufacturing company official. See Question 5.3 for EPA’s recommendations for BABA certification letters.
- Q5.6: How will assistance recipients manage certification letters for hundreds, possibly thousands of products?
 - A5.6: EPA recognizes that the new BABA requirements will cover most products used in typical water and wastewater infrastructure projects, and that the number of items which may require certification at large and/or complex projects may reach several hundred. EPA is concerned about the potential administrative burden that this would place on assistance recipients. EPA recommends that projects with a high number of potentially covered products meet with their funding authority about potential compliance strategies to minimize burden and streamline compliance activity. Assistance recipients should prepare contract bid solicitation documents with a statement for the consulting engineers and construction firms as follows: “By signing payment application and recommending payment, Contractor certifies they have reviewed documentation for all products and materials submitted for payment, and the documentation is sufficient to demonstrate compliance with Build America,

Buy America Act requirements.” In most cases, the assistance recipient’s representatives may assume the responsibility for their clients to conduct due diligence on compliance with applicable domestic preference requirements.

- Q5.7: Who is responsible for documenting the 55 percent content requirement for manufactured products under BABA? What if the final manufacturer cannot trace or verify domestic origin for all components?
 - A5.7: The manufacturer who signs a certification letter is responsible for documenting compliance with any of the three categories of products (iron and steel, manufactured products, or construction materials). For manufactured products, BABA requires that greater than 55 percent of the total cost of all components of the manufactured product be from domestic sources. EPA recommends that the certification letter for manufactured products document whether the item passes the content test in the final product along with a statement attesting to compliance with the BABA requirements for manufactured products.
- Q5.8: How do final product fabricators document compliance when the final step of manufacturing may be simply assembling components?
 - A5.8: It is acceptable, in many cases, especially for highly complex manufactured products that utilize many sub-components, for the final point of assembly to certify without using a “step certification” process. Multiple certifications (i.e., step certifications) or a singular certification can be used for a product, as long as the certifying official is willing to attest to the product’s compliance with BABA requirements at all stages of manufacturing.
- Q5.9: Will Material Test Reports be acceptable in lieu of a BABA certification for iron and steel?
 - A5.9: Material Test Reports (MTRs, commonly referred to as “Mill Certifications” or “Mill Certs”) provide the chemical composition of steel and iron from a mill or foundry. If an MTR accompanies the delivery of steel or iron to a project site with an invoice or bill of lading, EPA will consider it sufficient to demonstrate compliance (equivalent to a certification letter) as long as the MTR includes a manufacturer representative’s signature in addition to the location (city and state) of the mill/foundry. It is common for MTRs to be the first letter in a “step certification” if the product is further fabricated or painted, etc., by another manufacturer.
- Q5.10: Can a manufacturer use a fillable certification letter for products?
 - A5.10: EPA recommends that certifications be signed by representatives of the manufacturing entity. EPA does not oppose manufacturers using forms to internally develop letters within their company, thereby providing signed, non-manipulable certification letters to suppliers, distributors, and/or assistance recipients. A fillable form that can be changed by someone outside of the manufacturer after signature does not demonstrate compliance and may create compliance concerns for the manufacturer or assistance recipient.

- Q5.11: Are product certifications from suppliers and distributors allowed?
 - A5.11: EPA recommends that representatives of product manufacturers certify compliance and discourages suppliers and distributors from creating certification letters. EPA does not rule out the possibility that a third-party certification process, such as a certification by a distributor, may be viable. However, EPA is currently not aware of a system or proposed system that meets the EPA's recommendations for documentation of product certification.
- Q5.12: How long should assistance recipients keep compliance documentation?
 - A5.12: Assistance recipients should apply recordkeeping requirements for the project according to the procedures dictated by the funding authority. For most EPA grant programs, this is prescribed in the UGG at 2 CFR 200.334-200.338; e.g., the SRF programs require a minimum of three years. Other funding programs may require longer documentation retention periods.

SECTION 6: PROGRAMS WITH AMERICAN IRON AND STEEL REQUIREMENTS

- Q6.1: Does BABA supersede the American Iron and Steel (AIS) Requirements?
 - A6.1: The BABA requirements for items considered "iron and steel" are equivalent to those for covered iron and steel products under the AIS requirements in the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act. These requirements apply to the CWSRF, DWSRF, WIFIA, and Water infrastructure Community Grants. BABA includes a "Savings Provision" (Section 70917(b)) that states that BABA does not affect existing domestic content procurement preferences for infrastructure projects funded by Federal financial assistance programs that meet the requirements of section 70914. EPA views the AIS requirements as meeting the "iron and steel" product requirements of BABA Section 70914, as they both include the key requirement that items made of iron and steel be wholly manufactured in the United States from the point of melting and/or pouring the iron or steel components through final manufacturing step. Because of the "Savings Provision" of Section 70917, the AIS requirements satisfy the "iron and steel" requirements of BABA. For the programs that have AIS requirements, EPA intends to implement BABA requirements the same way for iron and steel items as it has done for AIS products.
- Q6.2: For iron and steel products, does a manufacturer need to demonstrate compliance from initial melting through the finished product?
 - A6.2: For iron and steel products, the BABA requirements are the same as the existing AIS requirements, in that all of the iron and steel in a covered product (that is, the product is comprised of more than 50 percent iron and steel by material cost) must be melted and poured in the United States and all subsequent manufacturing processes (such as grinding, rolling, bending, reheating, and casting) must occur in the United States.

Q6.3: Will EPA apply the same manufacturing standards for BABA iron and steel products as for the American Iron and Steel (AIS) requirements?

- A6.3: Yes. For AIS, EPA did not require raw materials used in the production of steel or iron to be domestically sourced. For BABA, EPA interprets the requirements to be the same. Hence, like AIS, raw materials in the production of iron and steel subject to BABA requirements would not need to be domestically sourced. The key step for both AIS and BABA domestic iron and/or steel production is the melting/pouring (that is, the location of the furnace), which must be in the United States.
- Q6.4: Will the certification process be similar to the process established for the American Iron and Steel requirements?
 - A6.4: EPA expects the certification process for the BABA requirements to be very similar to that established for the AIS requirements. For iron and steel products, the process should remain the same for AIS and BABA. EPA recommends for manufactured products and for construction materials that certification letters include direct reference to the product/material content requirements under BABA, in addition to an affirmative statement verifying that the product meets the BABA requirements.
- Q6.5: Will duplicate certification letters be required for AIS and BABA for iron/steel products?
 - A6.5: No. Compliance with BABA requirements will be sufficient to demonstrate compliance with AIS requirements for iron and steel products. If a project is subject to BABA, the only demonstration of compliance necessary is with the BABA requirements, of which the iron and steel requirements are equivalent to those of the AIS statutory requirements: the iron or steel in a product made primarily or predominantly of iron and steel (comprising more than 50 percent iron and steel by material cost) must be melted and/or poured in the United States and all subsequent manufacturing processes must occur in the United States.

SECTION 7: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC ISSUES

- Q7.1.: How do the BABA requirements apply to Community Grants?
 - A7.1: The Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending grants for the construction of drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure and for water quality protection are subject to the requirements specified in the explanatory statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act (Explanatory Statement for Division G of P.L. 117-13, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022). The explanatory statement asserts: “Applicable Federal requirements that would apply to a Clean Water State Revolving Fund or Drinking Water State Revolving Fund project grant recipient shall apply to a grantee receiving a CPF grant under this section.” Therefore, the federally funded Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending grants are subject to the same requirements that apply to CWSRF or DWSRF projects, including BABA and AIS requirements. See also A1.2.

- Q7.2: Should SRF projects covered by the BABA SRF Projects Design Planning Adjustment Period Waiver follow the same procedures for demonstrating compliance as outlined for American Iron and Steel requirements?
 - A7.2: Yes. The SRF Design Planning Adjustment Period waiver does not waive the iron and steel requirements under BABA. The SRF programs have existing domestic preference requirements for SRF projects under CWA Section 608 and SDWA Section 1452(a)(4) (AIS requirements) to use iron and steel products that are produced in the United States. Sections 70917(a) and (b) of BIL explain the application of BABA to existing domestic preference requirements. Specifically, the savings provision in Section 70917(b) states that existing domestic preference requirements that meet BABA requirements are not affected by BABA. The statutory AIS requirements were existing at the time BABA became law and satisfy the BABA iron and steel requirements. Therefore, the statutory AIS requirements that have previously applied to SRF-funded projects will continue to do so, and compliance with AIS requirements will satisfy the BABA iron and steel requirements. Demonstration of compliance for iron and steel products will follow the AIS implementation policies for projects subject to the waiver.
- Q7.3: For SRF programs, is BABA considered a federal cross-cutting authority? (i.e., do “equivalency” rules apply?)
 - A7.3: Yes, BABA is considered a federal cross-cutting requirement that applies to SRF assistance equivalent to the federal capitalization grant (i.e., “equivalency” projects). EPA’s SRF regulations at 40 CFR 35.3145 and 35.3575 require states and recipients of SRF funds equivalent to the amount of the federal capitalization grant to comply with federal cross-cutting requirements. Section 70914 of the IIJA, which states when a Buy America preference applies, explains that “none of the funds made available for a Federal financial assistance program for infrastructure...may be obligated for a project unless all of the iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in the project are produced in the United States.” Therefore, BABA only applies to projects funded in an amount equivalent to the federal capitalization grant and not to those projects receiving funds in excess of the capitalization grant (i.e., “non-equivalency” projects). (Note: The AIS requirements continue to apply for all SRF projects, including non-equivalency projects, and all WIFIA and Community Grant projects, because equivalency does not apply.)
- Q7.4: Do the BABA requirements apply to Drinking Water State Revolving Fund set-asides?
 - A7.4: Due to requirements related to the deposit of funds in the DWSRF program, almost all of the funds used to conduct set-aside activities are Federal dollars. Therefore, Federal cross-cutting requirements must be applied to all set-aside activities. However, in the case of most set-aside activities, the cross-cutting requirements will not be implicated because of the nature of the activities conducted under the set-asides. Because the BABA requirements only apply to infrastructure, and infrastructure typically is not an eligible set-aside expenditure (with one potential exception being loans for incentive-based source water protection

measures under the Local Assistance and Other State Programs Set-Aside), the BABA requirements will not apply to most set-aside activities.

- Q7.5: What if an SRF project is refinanced using Federal financial assistance on or after May 14, 2022?
 - A7.5: If an SRF project began construction, financed from another funding source, prior to May 14, 2022, but is refinanced through an assistance agreement executed on or after that date, BABA requirements will apply to all construction that occurs on or after May 14, 2022, through completion of construction, unless a waiver applies. There is no retroactive application of the BABA requirements where a refinancing occurs for an SRF project that has completed construction prior to May 14, 2022. (Note: If SRF funding is used for the refinancing, the AIS requirements may still apply depending on the timing of construction.)
- Q7.6: What are the roles and responsibilities for SRF programs for BABA implementation?
 - A7.6: Implementation of the BABA requirements for the State Revolving Fund programs will continue the roles and responsibilities from the successful AIS implementation process.

As with AIS, it is both the assistance recipient's and the state's responsibility to ensure compliance with the BABA requirements. The state is the recipient of a federal capitalization grant and must comply with all grant conditions, including a condition requiring adherence to BABA requirements.

Consequently, states are strongly advised to conduct site visits of projects during construction and review documentation demonstrating the assistance recipient's proof of compliance. In EPA's experience, most states conduct periodic site visits and arrange timely meetings with funded projects. Observed best practices typically include a meeting early in the process (sometimes before bid and usually prior to commencing construction) and at least one project site visit during the construction process. Assistance recipients must maintain documentation of compliance with the BABA requirements, as explained in question 5.3. The documents must be kept by the assistance recipient and should be reviewed by the state during project reviews.

The state's role in the waiver process is to review any waiver requests submitted to the state to ensure that all necessary information has been provided by the assistance recipient prior to forwarding the request to EPA. If a state finds the request lacking, the state should work with the assistance recipient to help obtain complete information. Question 4.1 explains the information needed by EPA to expediently review a waiver request.

In order to implement the BABA requirements, EPA has developed an approach for effective and efficient implementation of the waiver process to allow projects to proceed in a timely manner. The framework described below will allow states, on behalf of the assistance recipients, to apply for waivers of the BABA requirements directly to EPA Headquarters. Only waiver requests received and/or endorsed from states will be considered. Pursuant to BABA, EPA has the responsibility to make findings as to the issuance of waivers to the BABA requirements.

Step-by-step SRF Waiver Process

The waiver process begins with the assistance recipient. To fulfill the BABA requirements, the assistance recipient must in good faith design the project (where applicable) and solicit bids for construction with American-made iron and steel, manufactured goods, and construction materials. It is essential that the assistance recipient include the BABA terms in any request for proposals or solicitations for bids, and in all contracts (see Appendix 2 for sample construction contract language). The assistance recipient may receive a waiver at any point before, during, or after the bid process, if one or more of three statutory conditions is demonstrated to EPA and approved.

To apply for a project-specific waiver, the assistance recipient should email the request in the form of a Word document (.doc) or editable PDF (.pdf) to the funding program. It is strongly recommended that each state identify a person or persons for BABA communications. The state designee(s) will review the application for the waiver and determine whether the necessary information has been included (Note: More information may be provided in the future regarding what information is required to be included in waiver requests). Once the waiver application is complete, the designee will forward the application to CWSRFWaiver@epa.gov or DWSRFWaiver@epa.gov.

Evaluation by EPA

After receiving an application for waiver of the BABA requirements and ensuring sufficient information was provided, EPA will publish the request on its website for 15 days and receive public comment. EPA will then determine whether the application properly and adequately documents and justifies the statutory basis cited for the waiver.

In the event that EPA finds that adequate documentation and justification has been submitted, the Administrator may grant a waiver to the assistance recipient. EPA will notify the state designee whether a waiver request has been approved or not approved as soon as such a decision has been made. Granting such a waiver is a four-step process:

1. Research – After receiving an application for a waiver, EPA will perform market research to determine whether the iron, steel, manufactured goods, or construction materials are available domestically.
2. Posting – After research, if no domestic product has been identified, EPA is required to publish the application and all material submitted with the application on EPA's website for 15 days. During that period, the public will have the opportunity to review the request and provide informal comment to EPA. The website can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/cwsrf/build-america-buy-america-baba-waivers-open-public-comment>.
3. Evaluation – After receiving an application for waiver of the BABA requirements, EPA will determine whether the application properly and adequately documents and justifies the statutory basis cited for the waiver to determine whether or not to grant the waiver.

3. Signature of waiver approval by the Administrator or another agency official with delegated authority – As soon as the waiver is signed and dated, EPA will notify the State SRF program and post the signed waiver on the Agency's website. The assistance recipient should keep a copy of the signed waiver in its project files.

(Note: Additional steps may be required in the future regarding the waiver process depending on additional guidance from OMB)

APPENDIX 1

Example Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act Construction Contract Language

ALL CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS MUST HAVE A CLAUSE REQUIRING COMPLIANCE WITH THE BABA REQUIREMENTS. THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT COULD BE INCLUDED IN A PROJECT'S CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT. EPA MAKES NO CLAIMS REGARDING THE LEGALITY OF THIS CLAUSE WITH RESPECT TO STATE OR LOCAL LAW:

The Contractor acknowledges to and for the benefit of the _____ (“Owner”) and the _____ (the “Funding Authority”) that it understands the goods and services under this Agreement are being funded with federal monies and have statutory requirements commonly known as “Build America, Buy America;” that requires all of the iron and steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in the project to be produced in the United States (“Build America, Buy America Requirements”) including iron and steel, manufactured products, and construction materials provided by the Contractor pursuant to this Agreement. The Contractor hereby represents and warrants to and for the benefit of the Owner and Funding Authority (a) the Contractor has reviewed and understands the Build America, Buy America Requirements, (b) all of the iron and steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in the project will be and/or have been produced in the United States in a manner that complies with the Build America, Buy America Requirements, unless a waiver of the requirements is approved, and (c) the Contractor will provide any further verified information, certification or assurance of compliance with this paragraph, or information necessary to support a waiver of the Build America, Buy America Requirements, as may be requested by the Owner or the Funding Authority. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Agreement, any failure to comply with this paragraph by the Contractor shall permit the Owner or Funding Authority to recover as damages against the Contractor any loss, expense, or cost (including without limitation attorney’s fees) incurred by the Owner or Funding Authority resulting from any such failure (including without limitation any impairment or loss of funding, whether in whole or in part, from the Funding Authority or any damages owed to the Funding Authority by the Owner). If the Contractor has no direct contractual privity with the Funding Authority, as a lender or awardee to the Owner for the funding of its project, the Owner and the Contractor agree that the Funding Authority is a third-party beneficiary and neither this paragraph (nor any other provision of this Agreement necessary to give this paragraph force or effect) shall be amended or waived without the prior written consent of the Funding Authority.

APPENDIX 2

Example Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act Assistance Agreement Language

ALL FEDERAL FINANCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE ASSISTANCE AGREEMENTS MUST HAVE A CLAUSE REQUIRING COMPLIANCE WITH THE BABA REQUIREMENTS. THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT COULD BE INCLUDED IN AN ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT (E.G., SRF LOAN AGREEMENT). EPA MAKES NO CLAIMS REGARDING THE LEGAL SUFFICIENCY OF THIS CLAUSE WITH RESPECT TO STATE LAW:

Comply with all federal requirements applicable to the assistance received (including those imposed by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”), Public Law No. 117-58) which the Participant understands includes, but is not limited to, the following requirements: that all of the iron and steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in the Project are to be produced in the United States (“Build America, Buy America Requirements”) unless (i) the Participant has requested and obtained a waiver from the cognizant Agency^[1] pertaining to the Project or the Project is otherwise covered by a general applicability waiver; or (ii) all of the contributing Agencies have otherwise advised the Participant in writing that the Build America, Buy America Requirements are not applicable to the Project.

Comply with all record keeping and reporting requirements under all applicable legal authorities, including any reports required by the funding authority (such as EPA and/or a state), such as performance indicators of program deliverables, information on costs and project progress. The Participant understands that (i) each contract and subcontract related to the Project is subject to audit by appropriate federal and state entities and (ii) failure to comply with the applicable legal requirements and this Agreement may result in a default hereunder that results in a repayment of the assistance agreement in advance of the maturity of the Bonds, termination and/or repayment of grants, cooperative agreements, direct assistance or other types of financial assistance, and/or other remedial actions.

^[1] From OMB Guidance M-22-11: To avoid a need for duplicative waiver requests from entities that receive funding for one infrastructure project through multiple Federal agencies, the Federal agency contributing the greatest amount of Federal funds for the project should be considered the “Cognizant Agency for Made in America” and should take responsibility for coordinating with the other Federal awarding agencies. Such coordination will provide uniform waiver criteria and adjudication processes, minimize duplicative efforts among Federal agencies, and reduce burdens on recipients. The Cognizant Agency for Made in America shall be responsible for consulting with the other Federal awarding agencies, publicizing the proposed joint waiver, and submitting the proposed joint waiver for review to MIAO.

**Build America Buy America (BABA) Tracking
Private Side Lead Service Line Replacement**

Customer Name: John Doe
 Customer Service Identifier/Site Address: 1234 Nowhere Dr, Oshkosh
 Contractor Name: Plumber
 Date Work Completed: 9/12/2024

The purpose of this spreadsheet is to document and track the total material cost of the customer's service line replacement, the items that are documented as having been produced domestically, and the amount and percentage of products that are claimed under the "de minimis" waiver from the BABA requirement meaning that they are either of foreign origin or of unknown origin.

Only fill/edit cells highlighted in green!

Items claimed as de minimis shall represent no more than five percent of the total project cost.

Item No.	BABA Tracked Product Description	Domestic (enter"Y" for yes)	DeMinimis (enter"Y" for yes)	Quantity	Unit Cost	Total BABA Material Cost	DeMinimis Cost
		Choose only one					
1	1" pex pipe	Y		25	\$1.25	\$31.25	\$0.00
2	1" Valve	Y		1	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$0.00
3	pipe fittings		Y	3	\$18.00	\$54.00	\$54.00
4	tracing wire		Y	25	\$0.55	\$13.75	\$13.75
5	90 degree 1" bend	Y		1	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$0.00
6						\$0.00	\$0.00
7						\$0.00	\$0.00
8						\$0.00	\$0.00
9						\$0.00	\$0.00
10						\$0.00	\$0.00
11						\$0.00	\$0.00
12						\$0.00	\$0.00
13						\$0.00	\$0.00
14						\$0.00	\$0.00
15						\$0.00	\$0.00
16						\$0.00	\$0.00
17						\$0.00	\$0.00
18						\$0.00	\$0.00
19						\$0.00	\$0.00
20						\$0.00	\$0.00
Material Cost						\$169.00	\$67.75

Subcontractor Table								
	Subcontractor Name - Note each subcontractor must supply a copy of this form with the above area filled in with their itemized materials						Total BABA Subcontractor Material Cost	Total Subcontractor DeMinimis
1	Electrician						\$ 150.00	\$ 101.25
2	Conrete Sidewalk Repair						\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
3								
Sub totals							\$200.00	\$151.25

Materials Totals	\$369.00	\$219.00
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Total Project Cost, (Amount Billed to Property Owner): \$ 4,450.00
 Total Cost of All *De Minimis* Items (added from entries above): \$219.00
 Percent of Project Cost in DeMinimis Items: **4.921%**

Plumbing Contractor Signature