Secure the Source

Fairfax Water is collaborating with regional utilities and government partners on Secure the Source – a $25 million initiative to study long-term resilience of the National Capital Region's water supply. The study is evaluating alternative backup sources for the Potomac River to ensure reliable emergency drinking water supplies for the residents, businesses, federal agencies, and military installations across Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC.



Scope

A comprehensive, two-year regional analysis focusing on alternative secondary water supplies for the Potomac River.

Goal

Advance potential solutions to a 35% design level that will ensure several weeks of emergency backup drinking water for the National Capital Region and more than five million residents, workers, and visitors it hosts.

Economic & Public Health Impacts

Even a short-term disruption of the Potomac River would trigger a regional public health and national security emergency, and a month-long outage would be economically devastating. Reliable drinking water is essential to the region's health, safety, economy, and continuity of government operations.

Alternatives Being Evaluated

The study will evaluate options like converting existing quarries into drinking water reservoirs in Maryland or Virginia, or reusing highly treated wastewater from Blue Plains in Washington, DC.

Next Steps

The first phase of the study is expected to be completed in 2028; positioning the region to then pursue federal, state, and local investments for construction of the recommended solution(s).

Fairfax Water

A Regional Partnership

WSSCWATER DELIVERING THE ESSENTIAL

Fairfax Water

US Army Corps of Engineers® Baltimore District

Maryland Department of the Environment

ICPRB potomacriver.org

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Solutions for a Resilient Future

The risks posed by aging infrastructure, natural disasters, and climate variability require careful planning to develop solutions that benefit the entire region. By working together now, we can strengthen our regional resilience and ensure that safe, dependable drinking water is always there when our customers need it most.



Did You Know?

If the Potomac River were disrupted by contamination, severe or extended drought, or another emergency, the region would have enough water for only about one day.

Regional water utilities collaborate on emergency action plans to address water scarcity and conserve supplies during low-flow periods.

A one-month disruption could result in up to $15 billion in lost gross regional product and hundreds of millions in tax loss.

Fairfax Water