

(b) Planning, integrating, and establishing geographic service regions and districts, in cooperation with affected municipalities and based upon approved State-county master plans for water and sewerage, and solid waste disposal as provided in the [Health - Environmental] ENVIRONMENT Article, as well as other plans and studies permitted by this subtitle.

(c) Research and developmental studies and investigations into improved methods and techniques of water supply, liquid wastes, and solid wastes acquisition, transportation, processing, purification, disposal and management, and technical consultation and assistance to design, management, and operation personnel of the Service and, pursuant to an order or request, to appropriate municipalities or persons possessing similar responsibilities.

(d) To the extent appropriate in each instance, acquisition, design, construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, improvement, operation, maintenance, and repair of a water supply project, wastewater purification project, and solid waste disposal project, pursuant to an order of the Secretary of [Health and Mental Hygiene] THE ENVIRONMENT as further provided in §§ 3-110 and 3-111 of this subtitle; or pursuant to a mandatory agreement to provide requested services, as provided in § 3-108 of this subtitle; or pursuant to an approved five-year plan, as provided in § 3-106 of this subtitle.

(e) Except upon request of the appropriate municipality and pursuant to a contract between the Service and municipality, the Service may not acquire, construct, operate, or establish a wastewater purification project or solid waste disposal project, as the case may be, for (1) any area or district which, in the determination of the Secretary of [Health and Mental Hygiene] THE ENVIRONMENT, is receiving adequate service from a project owned by a municipality and operated in compliance with applicable laws and regulations; or (2) any area or district which, in the determination of that Secretary, will receive, within a reasonable time, adequate service from a project owned by a municipality and operated in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

(f) Execute the powers and perform the duties set forth in Subtitle 7 of this title, including the financing, acquisition, leasing, and operation of hazardous waste disposal facilities.

3-106.

(a) The director, after consultation with the Secretary of Natural Resources, the Secretary of State Planning, the Secretary of [Health and Mental Hygiene] THE ENVIRONMENT, and the municipalities affected, shall determine appropriate boundaries for water supply service regions, wastewater purification service regions, and solid waste disposal service regions. Service regions shall be based upon needs set forth in, and provide