

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 integration of, approved State-county master plans for water and sewerage or solid waste disposal, adopted pursuant to the Environment Article, but also may take account of other plans and studies.

(b) As soon as possible after the determination of appropriate boundaries, the director, after consultation with the municipalities affected, shall establish priorities for designating water supply service regions, wastewater purification service regions, and solid waste disposal service regions and formally designate the regions.

(c) Identical service regions need not be designated for water supply, wastewater purification and solid waste disposal projects. However, every part of the State shall be included in one of the service regions established in the State for water supply, wastewater purification, and solid waste disposal. No part of the State may be included in more than one of these service regions.

(d) As soon as possible after designation of a service region, the Service shall cause surveys, plans, studies, and estimates to be made, and after consultation with the municipalities located within the service region, prepare a five-year plan for each service region for the most effective and economical means of providing water supply, wastewater purification and solid waste disposal projects. In preparing a five-year plan, the Service shall consider the effects of public versus private ownership of water and wastewater facilities upon the provision of dependable, effective, and efficient water and wastewater services. The five-year plans shall give due consideration to the need for water supply and wastewater purification projects included in the approved county water and sewerage plans adopted in compliance with Title 9 of the Environment Article. The five-year plans shall designate the existing facilities or portions that are to be transferred to the jurisdiction of the Service; improvements to and extension of existing facilities; construction of new water supply, wastewater purification, and solid waste disposal projects; proposed methods of acquisition, ownership, and operation by the Service or by affected municipalities and persons, or both together with anticipated expenditures, sources of revenue, and charges for projects to be levied against municipalities and persons; and related matters the Service finds necessary or convenient.

(e) The Service may adopt a five-year plan only after at least one public hearing in each of the counties affected. At least 60 days before a hearing, the proposed five-year plan shall be submitted for review and comment to each county, and person against whom charges will be levied if the plan is adopted, to