

# Rural Water Issues Advisory [10/14/2019]

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**EPA Releases NEW Lead and Copper Rule (LCR):** The new LCR was announced on Thursday and according to EPA, the [proposed rule](#) “significantly improves the actions that water systems must take to reduce lead in the nation’s drinking water... By improving protocols for identifying lead, expanding sampling, and strengthening treatment requirements, our proposal would ensure that more water systems proactively take actions to prevent lead exposure, especially in schools, child care facilities, and the most at-risk communities.” EPA’s proposal does not change the existing action level of 15 ppb. EPA is proposing for the first time a new lead trigger level of 10 ppb, which would compel water systems to identify actions that would reduce lead levels in drinking water. EPA included special provisions for small systems that exceed the trigger and action levels with additional flexibility with respect to treatment and LSL replacement actions. This will allow smaller systems to protect public health by taking the action that makes sense for their community. The proposal focuses on six key areas. Under the proposal, a community water system would be required to take new actions, including: (1) a publicly-available inventory of LSL, (2) corrosion control treatment, (3) replacing lead service lines, (4) new sampling procedures, (5) notifying customers within 24 hours of certain samples, and (6) requiring water systems to take drinking water samples from the schools and child care facilities.

**Privatization to Solve the Small System Problem:** Private water companies recently made the following statement: “The **Problem:** rural water districts can struggle to afford to fund operations and maintenance of their water systems... The **Solution:** small water systems can ‘partner’ with neighboring water systems that serve larger communities ([National Association of Water Companies](#), last week).” Private companies are using this reasoning to promote new federal legislation, “The Voluntary Water Partnership for Distressed Communities (VWPDC) Act of 2019,” drafted by Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) that would provide certain preferences to their definition of partnerships.

**On Tuesday, American Water Company Reported 196 Water Main Breaks So Far This Year in Tennessee:** Less than a month ago, the utility company had a main break which left more than 35,000 people without water across Chattanooga. The company is facing a class action lawsuit filed against them over water main breaks ([WRBCTV](#)). **In August, the Illinois Attorney General Filed A Lawsuit Against Private Water Company Aqua Illinois Alleging It Contaminated a Small Village's Water with Lead** ([WGNTV](#)).

**Presidential Candidates Sanders and Warren Reject Privatized Water Systems:** Last week, Senator Warren released her plan to ensure all communities have access to safe drinking water. They include a vow that water systems would be in the public hands: “*America’s water is a public asset and should be owned by and for the public. A Warren administration will end decades of disinvestment and privatization of our nation’s water system—our government at every level should invest in safe, affordable drinking water for all of us* ([CNN](#)).”

**EPA October 29, Webinar on DWSRF Changes Resulting from the America’s Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) of 2018 and EPA’s Assistance for Small and Disadvantaged Communities’ Drinking Water Grant** ([EPA](#)).

**North Dakota Rural Water Invited to EPA Administrator WOTUS Event by Senator Cramer:** EPA with U.S. Senators Cramer and Hoeven hosted a discussion on the Waters of the United States rule on Monday in Bismarck. North Dakota Rural Water Systems Association was invited to participate. Administrator Wheeler called the 2015 rule “the biggest power grab on the environmental side in Washington, D.C., probably in the history of environmental regulations ([news](#)).”

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**National Rural Water Association**

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**The National Rural Water Association** is the country's largest public drinking water and sanitation supply organization with over 30,000 members. Safe drinking water and sanitation are generally recognized as the most essential public health, public welfare, and civic necessities.

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