

Rural Water Policy Advisory [10/2/2017]



Kansas Rural Water Association (KRWA) Stands Up for Rural Development Water Programs in U.S. Senate:

On Thursday, KRWA General Manager Elmer Ronnebaum testified before the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee to advocate for continue funding for USDA's water programs ([video](#), Elmer's testimony begins at 2:00 hours). The White House also provided witnesses for the hearing who were questioned on the Administration's proposal to eliminate the programs in their budget proposal. Congress restored the funding in fiscal year 2018 ([documentary](#)). However, it is likely the White House will repropose the elimination of the rural water initiatives in their fiscal year 2019 budget proposal in February.

Privatization Roundup: On Tuesday, Aqua America's CEO and vice president of the National Association of Water Companies explained to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee how private water companies are a solution to small and rural communities' water issues though more federal consolidation policy ([video](#)). On Tuesday, the Washington Post reported that the President has backed off his belief that the private sector can be the source of his infrastructure plan ([WaPost](#)). NRWA has been supporting the President's call for a new infrastructure initiatives ([NRWA in the U.S. Senate](#)), however, the association has raised concerns with relying on private financing for the rural and small communities' water infrastructure ([NRWA](#)). On Friday, the Financial Times published an op ed titled, "The pendulum swings against privatization," stating, "*privatization proponents mention the galvanising effect of the profit motive, or the entrepreneurial spirit of private enterprise. Opponents talk of fat cats and selling off the family silver... It is hard to see how water companies will ever truly compete with each other; the logic of geography suggests otherwise. All this matters because the broad lesson of the great privatization experiment is that it has worked well when competition has been unleashed, but less well when a government-run business has been replaced by a government-regulated monopoly* ([FT](#))."



With Bottles And Buckets, Puerto Ricans Seek The Water To Survive: "I can live without power," says Wanda Ferrer. "But I can't live without water." Bottled water isn't easy to get. Some stores have water in stock, but the lines are massive. Some municipalities have distributed water from trucks, though many residents in the interior say they haven't seen one. People fill containers with water from a stream near the Puerto Rico Highway 52 in Cayey. People have been without water service in their homes after Hurricane Maria roared through a week ago. Juan Pablo Santos, had tied two 55-gallon barrels to their roof with wire and filled them up before the hurricane. "With the gravity, through the hose, it comes down, and it's like you have running water," Vargas said. Other residents of Puerto Rico's interior are filling up at local springs, where PVC pipes stick straight out of the hillsides along expressways and little roads. They're a regular source of water for some residents here, storm or no storm. After Maria, these springs are more vital than ever. Malin Rivera Malero, filling up a large bucket, says this water is very clean. "There's no water anywhere else," she says. "Except the river," she says, referring to the large Rio Cañas. "And that's dirty, dirty." Still, Alberio plans to boil his water over a wood fire. And other people in line here say they plan to use this water only for cleaning, not for drinking. In the Calabaza River, local residents are bringing laundry in buckets to wash on the banks, drying

their clothes on rocks or makeshift lines. Other people hop in to bathe ([NPR](#)).

Small West Virginia Town Ambivalent About Merger with Rural Water District ([news](#)).

Diseases of Poverty Identified in Alabama County Burdened by Poor Sanitation: *“Many homes in the county are too scattered for a central wastewater facility, and septic systems are often a poor fit for the dense Black Belt soils, which do not drain well enough to filter waste. There are high-tech septic systems on the market, but the cost — around \$10,000 to \$12,000 — could consume most of a poor household’s annual income. An unknown number of homes instead connect their toilets and sinks to “straight pipes” that send the waste into gullies, creeks, or backyard pits. In these conditions, hookworm and other parasites can thrive ([Circle of Blue](#)).”*

President Trump to Address on Roll Back rules at EPA on Monday: The President is expected to give a major speech October 2, the first business day of the new fiscal year on his deregulatory agenda, amid indications that the administration will likely release additional details on pending deregulatory priorities ([news](#)).

EPA Taps New York State Assemblyman Pete Lopez to Lead Region 2

Costs for Rural Towns Surge after Hurricane Harvey Hits Water Systems: *“Patton Village had just started using its new \$10 million wastewater treatment system when Hurricane Harvey wrecked it last month. Repairing the wastewater plant could take months and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars that the town doesn’t have. Financial help may come in the form of a grant offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which gives emergency funds to communities whose water infrastructure has been damaged in a disaster ([news](#)).”*

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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