

Rural Water Policy Advisory [7/16/2018]

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U.S. Senators Stand Up for Rural and Small Communities: In 2012, EPA was provided discretion over the allocation of annually appropriated Safe Drinking Water Act technical assistance funding. The Agency used that discretion to eliminate the two full-time circuit rider-type positions that were operating in all states. NRWA and numerous U.S. Senators have been urging EPA Administrators to give preference to the technical assistance that small communities find to be most beneficial and effective when awarding technical assistance grants. Senator John Barrasso (WY) is organizing a Senate [letter](#) to the EPA Acting Administrator urging him to fix the EPA technical assistance funding problem. All Senators are encouraged to co-sign the letter. Co-signers so far are Senators: Barrasso (WY), Carper (DE), Capito (WV), Heitkamp (ND), Boozman (AR), Thune (SD), Rounds (SD), Smith (MN), Manchin (WV), Klobuchar (MN), Leahy (VT), Sanders (VT), Ernst (IA), Enzi (WY) and Moran (KS). Minnesota, Wyoming, Vermont, South Dakota, and West Virginia have received support from both of their Senators.

Former NRWA Regulatory Committee Chairman John Sasur (MA) Asked About the New EPA Chief's Knowledge of Rural Water: Sasur asked us about "Acting" EPA chief Andrew Wheeler who had served as the agency's deputy administrator since April. Wheeler is very familiar with Rural Water. From 1995 to 2009, he worked for one of the most helpful U.S. Senators ever for Rural Water, James Inhofe (OK). During that time:

- Wheeler worked on passage of the Safe Drinking Water Act amendments of 1996,
- NRWA was invited to testify before Inhofe's Environment and Public Works Committee numerous times (e.g. [Kansas Rural Water Association's Elmer Ronnebaum](#) on February 28, 2002).
- Senator Inhofe was the keynote speaker at the Washington Rally and was awarded the "Green Key to Rural and Small Community ([Congressional Quarterly 2003](#))."
- Wheeler worked on Senator Inhofe's 2005 and 2007 rural water bills, "[The Small System Drinking Water Act](#)."
- Wheeler and Inhofe acknowledged NRWA's 2008 Small Business Administration's selection of EPA's affordability and small systems variance policies under the Safe Drinking Water Act as one of their Top 10 Rules for Review (Senate [statement](#)).
- Inhofe provided comprehensive analysis of the problems with EPA disinfection byproducts rules ([2005 Inhofe letter](#) to EPA).

The New York Times Features Wheeler Promotion with the Headline, "You Can't Lead Unless You Listen," New E.P.A. Chief Says, Signaling Break From Pruitt ([NYTimes](#)).

PBS Newshour Features "Poverty in America," as Evidenced by Lack of Sewer Service in Alabama's Lowndes County: The United Nations Special Rapporteur for Extreme Poverty paid a visit to Lowndes County to showcase the racial discrimination in Alabama that prevents people from having sewage service - video segment features straight pipes coming right out of the house ([PBS video](#)).

Senate Environment Committee Witness Explains Lack of Rural Drinking Water and How Providing People with Private Water Wells is the Most Important Assistance the Government Can Provide ([Senate video testimony, July 10, 2018](#)): Witness details the burden of hauling water in rural Arkansas and shows video of experiences.

Ohio Governor Orders Lake Erie Farm Runoff Limits After Being Frustrated with Lack of Policy from Legislature ([OH Public Radio](#)): Governor Kasich picked a fight with Ohio's \$2.4 billion farming industry, ordering state agencies to stem the fertilizer runoff causing algae outbreaks in Lake Erie.

Mexican Town Where Coke is Cheaper Than Water: San Cristóbal de las Casas, Mexico is one of the country's rainiest regions, but running water is available only once every two days. When it does trickle from one woman's tap, the water is so heavily chlorinated that it's undrinkable. So many residents drink Coca-Cola, which is produced by a local bottling plant, can be easier to find than bottled water, and is almost as cheap ([New York Times](#)).

[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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