

Rural Water Issues Advisory [7/29/2019]

Private Water Companies Lobby for Preferential Legislation in Senate to Consolidate Small Communities - Illinois EPA Issues Several Violations Against Aqua Illinois for Lead Rule Violations: NRWA has been contacted by a U.S. Senator's office regarding legislation to promote "partnerships" among U.S. drinking water supplies ([text](#)). Private water companies have been urging Senators to support the legislation that will expand water privatization in the U.S. A state association executive director, when asked to comment by a Senator, explained the importance of keeping local any decisions to consolidate, regionalize or privatize. These decisions should be made without pressure or incentive to take one path. The director referenced [this article](#) and related legislation that changed the law and now requires public (i.e. water customers) notification when privatizing or regionalizing the water utility is considered. The private water companies are using small community non-compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act as a reason for promoting their legislation. Any success NRWA has in limiting the harm of this legislation will be thanks to the work, expertise, and relationships of this executive director. Last week, the Illinois EPA hit the Aqua water company with a notice of several violations after high lead levels were detected in several southern suburbs. The Illinois EPA also says the company failed to obtain the necessary permits to make changes in its water source, a violation of EPA rules. State regulators also fault Aqua Illinois for failing to properly monitor and report water quality test results last year. "Your supply did not collect the required number of sample results from a certified laboratory," the IEPA violation notice reads ([WGN - Chicago News](#)).

Michigan City Fixes PFAS Contamination, Resulting in Lead Violation: The city of Parchment (MI) switched water sources last July after PFAS were found in the water supply. The new water source caused lead service lines to leak the toxic metal into the drinking water. Tests show the water from July to December of 2018 to be 16 ppb. In the first six months of 2019, it was 58 ppb ([WWMT News](#)).

EPA Administrator Rescinds Washington State Water Rule Because It Was Unattainable: Administrator Andrew Wheeler signed a proposed rule on July 23 that would rescind stricter federal water quality rules for the state and revert to older standards. The Obama administration's EPA had created more stringent standards in 2016 that revised Washington's human health criteria for water, often called the "fish consumption rule" because it targets a water quality in which people can safely eat large quantities of locally caught fish. Washington State officials oppose the federal EPA action to make the state's water quality standards less stringent ([Bloomberg News](#)).

The New York Times Features Drinking Water Systems Compliance: *"Potable water may be in imminent jeopardy in as many as 1,000 community water systems across California... For more than a year, discolored water has regularly gushed from faucets in the family's bathroom and kitchen, as in hundreds of other households here in Willowbrook... They had no water meters, they had no computer systems, there were some extreme nepotism issues, and they were giving illegal holiday bonuses..."* ([NYTimes](#)).

Flint Pediatrician and Environmental Justice Activist Comes to Help Newark: Pediatrician Mona Hanna-Attisha rose to fame in 2015 when she revealed an uptick in blood-lead levels among children in Flint, Michigan. Now Hanna-Attisha is calling attention to a crisis in Newark, New Jersey, where water tests have shown lead levels that exceed the federal action level for safe drinking water. Hanna-Attisha said the crisis in Newark is now worse than the current situation in Flint. Hanna-Attisha, who believes that no amount of lead is safe, called the EPA threshold "a crappy standard" that "hasn't really caught up with science" ([Business Insider](#)).