

# Rural Water Policy Advisory [7/2/2018]

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**Senate Passes Farm Bill with "ALL" Rural Water Priorities:** On Thursday, the Senate passed its version of the Farm Bill. On September 28, 2017, Kansas Rural Water Association's Executive Director Elmer Ronnebaum testified before the Senate Farm Bill committee and urged the inclusion of provisions authorizing Rural Water Circuit Riders, Source Water Technicians, Wastewater Technicians, and Rural Development Grants & Loans ([C-SPAN](#)). All these Rural Water provisions were included in the Senate passed bill. The House version of the legislation passed narrowly the previous week. The bills now move forward to a conference between the two chambers to attempt to reach common ground before a House-Senate agreement can be presented to the President for his signature.

**All Senators Urged to Co-sign Barrasso Letter to Fix EPA Technical Assistance Funding:** The final draft of Senator Barrasso's letter has been released ([link](#)). As the letter states, this is an effort to have *"EPA to adhere to the Congressional intent of the Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act (PL 114-98). Under the law, EPA must give preference to both the organizations and the type of assistance that small and rural communities find most beneficial and effective when awarding drinking water technical assistance grants... implementation of PL 114-98 would soon reestablish on-site technical assistance in our states..."*

**NRWA Executive Committee to Review Five New Rural Water Federal Policy Positions this Weekend:**

1. H.R. 3387, "The Drinking Water System Improvement Act of 2017"
2. Senator Cardin legislation to assist low-income households with water bills
3. SDWA and EPA's Perchlorate MCL proposal
4. SDWA MCL for PFAS

Items 1-4 are explained in the June 2018 Regulatory Committee report to the Executive Committee ([link](#)). The fifth recommendation is for NRWA to craft and file comments on [EPA's June 7, advance notice of proposed rulemaking](#) soliciting information on how the agency estimates costs and benefits in the rulemakings. NRWA comments will include the following subject areas: arbitrariness of cost-benefit analysis rationale under the SDWA, lack of consistency in use of peer-review costs and benefits' science under the SDWA, lack of adequate small water systems cost analysis under the SDWA, and lack of "void for vagueness" reviews of certain costs and benefits of SDWA authorities.

**C-SPAN Interview, Flint (MI) Pediatrician Mona Hanna-Attisha Book, "What the Eyes Don't See":** Doctor Mona Hanna-Attisha details her efforts to provide scientific evidence that children in Flint, Michigan were being exposed to lead poisoning through the water supply (watch on [C-SPAN](#)). She mentions the following points in the interview: she looks up to Erin Brockovich; one's zip code is a predictor of life success; she has a heightened antenna for injustice, and was a young activist against social injustice; people two generations ago had high levels of lead in their blood but there are much lower levels in the general population now; incredible new science tells us, however, that very low levels of lead in children cause the steepest decline in cognition; there were race issues with local governmental emergency managers in Michigan; she told moms the water was safe during crises; EPA programs fail to keep up with the incredible new science; EPA was denying science, and science was speaking truth to power; a Flint foster home was tested at 5,000 ppb for lead; she is concerned with new Administration; the EPA Lead and Copper rule is weak; we need mandated lead service line replacement; she recommends lowering the EPA action level; etc.

**New Hampshire Senators Call on EPA to Take Immediate Action on PFAS in Drinking Water:** The Senators are calling on EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt to take immediate action to designate

PFAS as 'hazardous substances,' which would make PFAS covered under the EPA's Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) Section 102, and require responsible parties to be held accountable for any future release ([Senators' statement](#)).

**E. Coli Outbreak that Killed Five Traced to Canal Water in Arizona** ([NBC](#)).

**Local Governments Urge Illinois Governor to Veto Bill to Help Water Privatization:** State senators and mayors are urging Governor Rauner to veto an amendment to the Illinois Water Systems Viability Act because the provisions are bad for consumers and a boon for private water companies. A consumer watchdog group said the bill will allow private companies to grow unchecked at the expense of Illinois residents. The bill would remove a 7,500-connection cap on the size of water systems that private companies can buy ([ChicagoTribune](#)).

**Venezuela Drinking Water Dystopia:** Army controls drinking water spigots; distribution system falls apart; water becomes a luxury; people back up to springs for water; major access points in the capital of 5.5 million people are now run by soldiers or police; subsidized water has become a source of profit for those who control and deliver it; residents must haul containers to their homes for cooking and bathing; most people in Caracas get 30 minutes of water mornings and nights, igniting a mad rush to leave work or social gatherings to shower, wash and clean; and mosquito-spread diseases like dengue fever and Zika have multiplied as the insects lay eggs on people's buckets or rain barrels ([Bloomberg News](#)).

**Brits Told to Shower in FOUR MINUTES and to Stop Using Hoses** ([UK Sun](#)).

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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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