



## Special Single Issue Edition: **What Does Flint Mean to Rural Water?**



**Water Quality Activist Heroes:** Virginia Tech's Dr. Mark Edwards (engineer) and Dr. Yanna Lambrinidou (medical ethnographer) are two activist heroes. *The Washington Post* calls Edwards, "the heroic professor who helped un-cover the Flint lead water crisis" ([WashPo](#)). He teaches a course on ethics and heroism at Virginia Tech. He tells his students that everyone has it in them to be heroic. Edwards said, "*I get up every day with such a sense of purpose; I wish everyone could experience something like that once in their life.*" Edwards sees his role as continuing to hold the government accountable to the residents of Flint. "I didn't get in this field to stand by and let science be used to poison little kids," Edwards said. Dr. Edwards credits Dr. Lambrinidou with the successful effort to expose lead contamination in the City of Flint. Lambrinidou, president of Parents for Nontoxic Alternatives, believes the weaknesses in regulation that caused the problem have not been fixed.

**Edwards and Lambrinidou Say Local Water Authorities Game the System to cover up Lead in the Water** ([NBC](#)): Dr. Lambrinidou says that gaming the system can keep a utility in compliance while, "you can have severe citywide contamination that is causing miscarriages, fetal deaths

and elevated child lead levels." Lambrinidou claims costs that drive the conduct to avoid non-compliance requires remedial measures. "The remedial measures can be costly to them in terms of both money and public trust," Lambrinidou said. In 2014, EPA did not select Dr. Lambrinidou for its [National Drinking Water Advisory Committee](#) Panel recommending revisions to the current federal Lead and Copper Rule ([page 34](#)). After convening the panel, EPA later added Dr. Lambrinidou after protests (disclosure: NRWA representative John Sasur was appointed to the panel).

**VA Tech Holds Jan. 28th Seminar to Explain in Detail Its Activities in Flint:** During a lively seminar, engineering students explain how they discovered Flint has a 90th percentile of 26.8 parts per billion of lead in first draw samples, how the project allowed them to "work toward a common goal... to cement interpersonal bonds..." and that Flint has lead service lines in 50% of homes. VA Tech's provost says its 21st century university integrates scientific discovery and societal impact, and Flint is the true classroom. The dean of the college of engineering calls VA Tech's Flint Water Study team courageous, a word he does not use lightly. VA Tech considers "high lead" in Flint to be tests with over 5 parts per billion. VA Tech contacted all citizens with high lead to explain the situation. Students say they should be very proud of themselves. Flint consumers have high rates, \$150 a month on average. The VA Tech team was joined by *Concerned Pastors for Social Action*, *ACLU of Michigan*, *Democracy in Action*, and *What Are You Fighting For*. Highlights [Daily Show](#) for commentary. Students say working in Flint has changed their lives and gives them hope for the future. Dr. Edwards: warns of a new dark age if science does not work with the community; said the most powerful force in the universe is a mother worried about her child; said no one is safe until the corruption in the agencies that deal with science, engineering, and health is corrected; hopes for bi-partisan legislation; and added that agencies are corrupt because cowards get to keep their jobs while whistle blowers lose their jobs ([YouTube](#)).

**Michigan Governor Called to Resign in Wake of Flint Water Scandal** ([CNN](#)): Michael Moore and Matt Damon join effort calling for governor's resignation.

**Michigan Attorney General Thinks Water Billing Wrong:** Michigan's top prosecutor said that it's an "outrage" that residents of Flint are being forced to pay for water that's unsafe to drink — and his office may take action to stop the billing ([news](#)).

**NRWA's Regulatory Committee Reviews NRWA Policy After**

**Flint** (please contact us if you would like to review the committee notes).

**Flint Crisis Results in Call for Lead Action Level to Go to Zero** ([CBS news](#)).

**EPA Promotes NDWAC LCR Process:** In a January 21st, 2016 statement, EPA said, *"EPA is committed to improving the public health protection provided by the Lead and Copper Rule and is actively considering revisions to the rule. EPA's primary goal is to improve the effectiveness of the rule in reducing exposure to lead and copper from drinking water. To help shape an updated rule, EPA has engaged with a broad range of stakeholders and experts. In December 2015, the agency received extensive recommendations from our National Drinking Water Advisory Council and from other concerned citizen groups. The agency will carefully evaluate these recommendations, national experience in implementing the rule, and the experience in Flint to develop a proposed revision to the rule – which we expect to propose for comment in 2017."*

**Vermont Water Utility General Manager Shows How to Communicate Effectively, Honestly and Competently with Public and Press** ([VT news](#)).

**Flint Water Crisis "a Racial Crime":** Michael Moore says the water crisis in Flint is a "version of manslaughter." Flint is about racism, he said. NAACP President and CEO Cornell Brooks drew a direct connection between Flint's socioeconomic factors and the toxic drinking water. "Environmental Racism + Indifference = Lead in the Water & Blood," he tweeted ([CNN](#)).

**Senator Reid Said the Senate Should Focus on Other Municipal Water Supplies beyond Flint:** The Senate should focus on other municipal water supplies beyond Flint, he said. "We have a lot of communities around this country who have lead pipes, and a very deteriorating water system," said Senator Reid.

**Congress Responds to Flint:** Senators and Congressmen craft legislative proposals to expand public reporting requirements of lead testing and provide hundreds of millions of dollars for Flint to replace lead pipes. Senate bill S. 2466, the "Improving Notification for Clean and Safe Drinking Water Act," would require communities to notify the public whenever lead monitoring activities detect "any exceedance of a lead action level or any other prescribed level of lead" regulated by the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). The bill would direct EPA to notify the public about concentrations of lead in the water system discovered during monitoring if the state does not do so in a timely manner. Michigan Federal Representatives also crafted another legislative proposal to

authorize up to \$400 million for a new emergency infrastructure program under the SDWA to help Flint “replace or fix lead-contaminated water pipes, to hire new personnel, and to cover the cost of technical assistance provided by the EPA.” The legislation would also allow the state to forgive Flint’s outstanding Drinking Water State Revolving Fund debts.

**National Rural Water Association**

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