

**Power of a (Minnesota) Association:** Minnesota Rural Water Association's (MRWA) friend in Congress (Congresswoman McCollum) is the ranking member on the House [EPA funding subcommittee](#). MRWA recently urged the Congresswoman help MRWA and NRWA to fix the EPA funding problem by funding the recently passed Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance [Act](#) versus providing the funding at EPA's discretion. To ensure that occurs this year, we need a Democrat and Republican on each of the EPA funding subcommittees ([House](#) and [Senate](#)) to volunteer to take a special subcommittee lead on this effort. If you have a member on the EPA funding subcommittee (in addition to Representative McCollum) willing to help your state by taking the lead on this effort, please contact us. U.S. Senators on this subcommittee include: Murkowski (AK), Udall (NM), Alexander (TN), Cochran (MS), Blunt (MO), Hoeven (ND), McConnell (KY), Daines (MT), Cassidy (LA), Feinstein (CA), Leahy (VT), Reed (RI), Tester (MT), and Merkley (OR). U.S. Representatives on this subcommittee include: Calvert (CA), Simpson (ID), Cole (OK), Joyce (OH), Stewart (UT), Amodei (NV), Jenkins (WV), Pingree (ME), Kilmer (WA), and Israel (NY). We would ask them to: learn the issue, make the Chairman aware of the importance of the issue, and be the lead advocate for the funding on the subcommittee.

**EPA Announced FY 2015 Training and Technical Assistance Funding Awards:** Of the total \$12.7 million appropriated by Congress to help your states' small and rural communities, EPA selected the following organizations and amounts: \$5.7 million to Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP), \$5.178 million to National Rural Water Association (NRWA), and \$1.8 million to University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (UNC-Chapel Hill) as the lead for the Environmental Finance Center Network (EFCNet). NRWA's funding from this account was \$13 million in FY 2010. The Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance [Act](#) was passed by Congress to ensure technical assistance is funded in the most beneficial manner.

**Rain Leaks on Chemical Disinfectants in Storage in Brazil, Resulting Chemical Smoke Sends 66 to Hospital ([more](#)).**

**Minnesota Government Makes Rural Water a Priority Agenda Item in State of the Union, Promises \$167 Million to Improve Water Infrastructure ([more](#)).**

**NRWA's Grassroots Raise Issue with EPA's New Fourth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR4):** Rural water Steve of Maryland

comments: "For water systems whose source water comes from confined aquifers not under the influence of surface waters, is there any relief in the UCMR4 for having to test for potential surface water contaminants (i.e. cyanotoxins)? This is an unnecessary expense from which relief should be built into the regulations. For the organization that I used to manage, that operated 27 water systems, most of which were medium to small systems, the combined testing cost can be enormous. Florida Rural Water Association forwarded some cost estimates: the three Cyanotoxin Proficiency Testing Programs (CPTPs) being offered this year are intended to satisfy the increasing demand for conformity assessment for cyanotoxin analysis. The first two programs focus on source and finished drinking water, 2016-01 targets microcystins and has four samples fortified with one or more microcystin congeners of LR, RR, YR, LA and/or LF, 2016-02 targets anatoxin-a and cylindrospermopsin. Four samples will also be provided. Two versions of each program are available. The 'A' version, \$450.00, provides sufficient sample for analysis using instrumental analysis. The 'B' version, \$350.00, will provide sufficient sample for analysis using ELISA, RBA and/or PPIA."

### **Angry Residents Voice Earthquake Concerns in Oklahoma ([ABCnews](#))**

#### **Flint's Drinking Water Crises Updates:**

- **The President** has declared that an emergency exists in Flint and ordered federal aid to supplement state and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions in the area affected by contaminated water. FEMA is authorized to identify, mobilize, and provide at its discretion equipment and resources necessary to alleviate the impacts of the emergency. Emergency protective measures, limited to direct federal assistance, will be provided at 75 percent federal funding. This emergency assistance is to provide water, water filters, water filter cartridges, water test kits, and other necessary related items for a period of no more than 90 days.
- **Gov. Snyder** declared an emergency and has asked the President to issue an emergency declaration amid the Flint water crisis, saying the needs of people "far exceed the state's capability." Snyder said emergency measures could cost \$41 million, including \$10 million for a three-month supply of clean drinking water and millions more for filters, filter cartridges and water testing kits.
- **Federal prosecutors** said that they're working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on an investigation into problems with lead in Flint's water supply.
- **"EPA knew about Michigan water problem in April that led to Flint,**

*Mich.'s, drinking water crisis... The state did not take action at the time, nor did EPA. EPA head did not know what kind of action they could legally take. A legal opinion which wasn't ready until November," ([more](#)).*

- *"The percentage of **children younger than 5 with elevated lead levels** nearly doubled after the [source water] switch, from 2.1% to 4%. In city wards with the highest levels of lead in water, the numbers with high BLL jumped from 2.5% to 6.3%; in two wards, the levels more than tripled. In one home, water levels averaged 2,000 ppb... One sample from that home had lead levels reaching 13,000 ppb. Lee Anne Walters' son, Gavin, had BLL that rose from 2 to 6.5 mcg/dL after the switch," ([Forbes](#)).*

**NRWA on WOTUS Rule:** NRWA's attorney (Michael Bogert with Parsons Behle & Latimer) recently notified NRWA that he has completed a first draft of the NRWA amicus brief challenging the Rule ([working draft](#)). Michael Bogert is interested in any comments from NRWA members regarding definitions of "tributary" and "adjacency" as they appear in the Rule's construct for the "significant nexus" determinations. If you have any comments or examples of what might be the prospective, predicted application of the WOTUS Rule, please forward them to us. The filing of the NRWA brief will likely occur in the U.S. Sixth Circuit soon after that court announces its decision on jurisdiction of the various pending suits, likely by late January or early February.

**EPA Highlights New Effort to Increase Private-Corporate Functions in Water Utilities:** EPA's Water Infrastructure and Resiliency Finance Center (WIRFC) hosted a discussion and celebration of its first anniversary on January 14th. EPA said one of the main goals for the Center is to find new money to support public-private partnerships. EPA's budget includes \$50 million to fund the WIRFC ([EPA](#)).

**Movie Review of "Written on Water":** Documentary on the harsh landscape of the High Plains of Texas and a small town's fight to stay alive against the decline of the life-giving Ogallala Aquifer ([trailer](#)).

**How Much Hexavalent Chromium and Vanadium in Drinking Water is Too Much?:** North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality officials expressed alarm that the newly calculated screening level for hexavalent chromium in wells, 0.07 parts per billion, was too tough. Public water systems have only to meet a far higher federal standard for total chromium of 100 ppb which includes hexavalent chromium. While 424 of 476 well owners got "don't-drink" advisories, only 12 wells broke federal water

standards. The Assistant Environment Secretary said, “It’s incredibly confusing to the consumer.” California set the nation’s first “public health goal” for hexavalent chromium in drinking water: 0.02 ppb, even lower than North Carolina’s screening level. But in setting a regulatory standard in 2014, California set a much higher bar of 10 ppb ([more](#)).

**National Rural Water Association**

**Contact:** Mike Keegan, Policy Analyst <[keegan@ruralwater.org](mailto:keegan@ruralwater.org)>  
(Washington, DC)