

Flint Water [Hero](#) Takes to CSPAN to Blame EPA on the Same Day (Feb. 29) EPA Announces New Lead Policies: Virginia Tech's Dr. Mark Edwards (engineer) appeared on C-Span to talk about EPA's Lead and Copper Rule. Dr. Edwards: complimented Michigan Governor Snyder; referenced George Orwell and [Arthur Miller](#) to characterize Flint; said cost is an issue in determining safe water; said lead pipes are not the largest problem - but galvanized pipes; blamed EPA and said EPA has turned a "blind-eye"; blamed state civil servants, not mayor, not emergency management, not governor; said emergency manager did not make the decision; said the lead is coming from in the house; said DC lead problem was worse; said that in DC, federal agency ran the entire water system; said DC was 20-30 times worse than Flint; said CDC covered it up; was outraged about what CDC and EPA did in DC; said without water civilization ends; said Flint Senate deal will not help Flint; said money needs to be directed to Flint, but spreading money around to various government agencies that don't take lead in water seriously will not help; said Flint health crisis has been over since October; and finally, said Michigan Gov. is top expert on federal lead rule. EPA announced its new lead polices predicated on the Flint experience on Feb. 29 ([EPA new lead polices](#)) saying, *"We will be meeting with every state drinking water program across the country to ensure that states are taking appropriate actions to identify and address lead action level exceedances and fully implementing and enforcing this important rule."*

Arthur Miller's Adapted Play "[Enemy of the People](#)" Review: The play uses a water contamination issue in a small town as an allegory to the conflict between the freedom and the suppression of speech. The local doctor finds the springs in the town are contaminated by a tannery. Town official with a financial incentive to suppress the news tells the doctor to *"be reasonable, act with discretion, and if you value your career, deny danger of the water."* Doctor tells the officials, *"You and the administration insisted on building that water system where it is to save money and now you are afraid to admit it; the water is poison; we are getting rich peddling poison; this is a revolution; we will expose every lie that we live with; and there is a conspiracy against the truth."*

Water Prof. Edwards and Senator Mike Lee (UT) Oppose Senate Flint Water Relief Package: Utah Senator Mike Lee is blocking the Senate \$220 million in aid bill intended to help the Flint Michigan water crisis. The Senator said, *"Congress has special mechanisms for emergency spending when it is needed, but to date Michigan's governor has not asked us for any, nor have Michigan's Senators proposed any. Contrary to media reports, there is no federal 'aid package' for Flint even*

being considered. The Senate legislation is meant to federalize the nation's water infrastructure financing system. The state of Michigan has an enormous budget surplus this year and a large rainy-day fund, totaling hundreds of millions of dollars. Governor Snyder has requested \$200 million of that from the state legislature for Flint this year. Relief and repair efforts are already in the works. The people and policymakers of Michigan right now have all the government resources they need to fix the problem."

Should States Have a Right of First Refusal over WIFIA Funding?: The most recent [Atlantic magazine](#) features a water article covering "Alejandra Fierra who lives with her husband in the Hueco Tanks colonia, where they bought land in 1987. They still don't have access to running water or a sewer system. When her children were growing up, she would pour water from a well into a tub and wash them, one, two, three in the same water. She does the same for her dishes. She gets a delivery of a 2,500 gallon water tank for bathing and washing, and buys bottled water from Walmart for drinking and cooking. In Montana Vista, a colonia some 22 miles east of El Paso, the septic tanks of the 2,400 families who live there frequently overflow, creating rivers of sewage in their backyards. In the summer, the smell can be horrific. She loves her home and her neighborhood, but she doesn't understand why it has taken so long to put in a sewer system." Last week, the U.S. Senate reached agreement on a Flint financial aid package which includes \$70 million to start a new federal program that **can't be used** to help the Montana Vista colonia (or any colonia) or the City of Flint. Instead of targeting the water funding to communities most in need, the EPA's Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program subsidizes low-interest loans to large water projects (including corporately-owned water companies) that can demonstrate an investment-grade rating. Should states have the right of first refusal on the funding for the new federal program to commit the funds to their state funding program?

The Week to Show Support for Your State Association on

Congressional Letter: Every Member of Congress can show their support for small and rural communities by co-signing the House and Senate Dear Colleague letters. In addition to the "Fix EPA Funding" letters, Congressman Takai (HI) has circulated a House letter in support of USDA funding priorities ([all letters](#)). We will be circulating all the current co-signers early this week.

Representative Tonko (NY) Introduces Drinking

Water SRF Reauthorization Bill: H.R. 4653, Assistance, Quality, and Affordability Act of 2016 would significantly increase funding authorization

levels for local communities with water infrastructure deficiencies. Rep. Tonko said, *"The Flint water crisis has brought attention to our nation's aging water infrastructure and what can happen when we try to cut corners in state budgets, but the discussion cannot end in Michigan. Cash-strapped local governments struggle each year to find sufficient funds for repair and replacement of essential water infrastructure. Between the steady decline in federal funding and the growing need for more support from Washington, greater burden has fallen upon local governments at a time when they simply cannot shoulder it. From simple water main breaks that bring everyday life to a screeching halt to larger disasters that harm a generation of lives, it's well past time to get real about the funding levels that are needed to bring our water infrastructure into the 21st century"* ([bill summary](#)).

Wisconsin Health Officials Testing Water for Elizabethkingia Bacteria:

An outbreak of unusual bacteria has sickened 44 people in southern Wisconsin and left 18 dead. Lab tests suggest a common source of the bacteria, called Elizabethkingia. But the investigation which started in January has not revealed the source, health officials said ([more](#)).

Flint Resident Wonders if Lead Caused

Her Miscarriage: Nakiya Wakes had dreams of making a new start with her two children when she moved to Flint, Michigan in June, 2014. But five weeks into her pregnancy, her hopes of a fresh beginning came crashing down. *"I see something from the city of Flint saying that pregnant women and people 55 and over should not be drinking this water," Wakes said. "I was like are you serious, and I'm just coming home to losing my babies? And now just, it could have been the water that did this"* ([CNN](#)).

Iowa Xenia Rural Water District Responds to Alarming New Coverage:

"Like other municipal and rural water providers, Xenia's very reason for existing is to protect public health, and Xenia Rural Water District takes very seriously our commitment to provide safe drinking water... We vigorously disagree that Xenia's actions indicate an attempt to "cover up the problem" as suggested in the article. We broadly communicate through every reasonable means available to us because we believe it best serves the customers we are committed to protecting" ([more](#)).

Wenona Water Superintendent Recognized: The Illinois Rural Water Association, the largest rural utility association in the state, selected Mitch McCaw as its Water System Operations Specialist of The Year ([more](#)).

Mosul Dam Engineers Warn It Could Fail at Any Time, Killing One Million: Iraqi engineers involved in building the Mosul dam 30 years ago have warned that the risk of its imminent collapse and the consequent death toll could be even worse than reported. They pointed out that pressure on the dam's compromised structure was building up rapidly as winter snows melted and more water flowed into the reservoir, bringing it up to its maximum capacity, while the sluice gates normally used to relieve that pressure were jammed shut ([Guardian](#)).

National Rural Water Association

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