

Rural Water Policy Advisory [11/12/2018]

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EPA Responds to the 39 U.S. Senators Who Wrote EPA in July Urging the Agency to Follow the Law in Providing Technical Assistance: Last week, NRWA received the [EPA response](#) which explains how EPA implements the Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act (Public Law 114-98). It appears that EPA interprets the Act differently from the Senators. EPA explains,

“The Agency evaluated [technical assistance] applications based on the criteria outlined in Public Law 114-98, which include considering input from communities on the type of assistance and organization that those communities believe would be the most effective and beneficial. As outlined in the RFA, the EPA set aside 20 percent of the selection criteria to give applicants the opportunity to demonstrate their level of programmatic capability, experience, and support from small and rural communities.”

The [Senators’ July letter to EPA](#) explains that the predominant directive to EPA under the law is to prioritize the assistance that small communities find beneficial.

“We write once again to urge the Environmental Protection Agency (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.”

English Newspaper Explains the Politics of Rural America: *“[Democrats] failing to connect with the rural voters it needs to win the next presidential election... Rural votes carry outsize weight because of the structure of America’s political system... The Democratic party retreated from fighting for large parts of rural America over the past two decades as support for the Republicans grew and in the belief that an increasingly liberal vote in the cities would hold sway... ([Guardian](#)).”*

NRWA at National Lead Service Line Removal (LSLR) Collaborative: Maryland Rural Water Association’s George Hanson represented NRWA at last week’s LSLR Collaborative formal meeting ([agenda](#)). Hanson’s concept of an initiative that certifies that a community is lead-free was supported by many members of the Collaborative.

Environmental Group Proposes a New Circuit Rider Initiative to Promote NPDES Watershed Trading: The Willamette Partnership recently released a report, [“Priority Actions for Advancing Water Quality Trading.”](#) which investigates what’s keeping water quality trading on the sidelines and proposes a detailed action agenda to help get water quality trading on the ground in more watersheds across the United States. The report recommends *“a full-time circuit rider position to help state regulatory agencies implement trading programs... A watershed solution circuit rider who can help utilities craft trading plans and incorporate trading into permits. This approach is used by the National Rural Water Association to provide technical assistance to rural water utilities in operational, financial, and management issues as well as*

energy audits."

EPA Region 1 and Region 1 State Associations Held Annual Meeting Last Week ([Twitter](#)).

Pope Says Safe Drinking Water is a Human Right ([AP News](#)).

Ohio Gov. Kasich Fights with States' Farms Over Water Quality: A state panel has again delayed implementation of Ohio Gov. John Kasich's plan to create new regulations on thousands of farms in a bid to reduce fertilizer and manure feeding Lake Erie's sometimes toxic algae blooms ([AP News](#)).

Baltimore Becomes First Major City to Ban Privatization ([F&WW.org](#)).

New Jersey American Water Overcharged Customers \$35 Million ([USA Today](#)).

[National Rural Water Association](#)

Contact: Mike Keegan, Policy Analyst <keegan@ruralwater.org>

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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