

# Rural Water Policy Advisory [1/1/2018]

**Buyer's Remorse of WIFIA?:** U.S. Senator John Boozman (AR) is expected to introduce [legislation](#) to create a new \$1 billion water infrastructure loan mechanism for states to be administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Senator's legislation would fundamentally amend the 2014 Water Infrastructure Financing and Innovation Act (WIFIA) to provide \$200 million per year that EPA would provide to state revolving loan fund (SRF) authorities to use as security for Treasury loans. During the crafting of the WIFIA legislation in Congress, NRWA, state agencies, and environmental groups urged Congress to utilize the existing SRFs as the source of any new federal authority for issuing "secured loans" ([NRWA, 2014](#)). Boozman's legislation would allow state SRFs to apply for 100 percent of federal funding rather than the current 49/51 percent split in WIFIA.

**Trump Administration Prepares to Unveil Infrastructure Financing Package:** Fresh off his tax bill victory, President Trump is planning a "mid-to-late January" rollout of the president's infrastructure plan leading up to his first State of the Union address on Jan. 30 where rebuilding the nation's roads, bridges, airports and railways is expected to be a major theme ([ABC News](#)). NRWA will be pressing for small and rural community issues to be addressed as the package moves through Congress. To ensure any water infrastructure initiative is beneficial to rural and small town America, it should utilize or be modeled on current federal programs such as the U.S. Rural Utility Service water infrastructure program which contains a needs-based criterion and/or the EPA state revolving loans (SRFs) program which requires that federal subsidies be targeted to the communities most in need based on their economic challenges combined with the public health necessity of the project.

**NRWA President to Raise Small Community Issues at EPA's January 8<sup>th</sup> Forum on How to Revise the Lead and Copper Rule (LCR):** President Steve Fletcher will represent NRWA in EPA's formal consultation on "[Federalism](#)" for rewriting the LCR. Last week, Fletcher raised the issue that the current rule does not recognize that many rural water systems only have PVC lines in their distribution system. This issue will likely be raised by NRWA during the consultation.

**Utah, Kansas, Mississippi and Florida Rural Water Associations Urge Senators to Help Persuade EPA to Allow Mandatory Tier 2 EPA Violations to be Posted to the Internet Versus the Current Mandate for Individual Mailings:** The four state associations were in contact with their Senators last week asking them to urge the new Environmental Protection Agency to clarify or acknowledge that the Agency's "electronic delivery" policy applies to federally mandated "Tier 2" public notices. In 2015, [Senator Wicker](#) inquired about such regulatory relief to the EPA but they did not directly answer the Senator's concern regarding Tier 2 notices and the status quo remains in place. The state associations are optimistic that a "new" inquiry to the current EPA administration may result in a different reply.

**Florida TV News Feature – "How racism contributed to Charleston Park's drinking water problems":** Denying racism has contributed to Charleston Park's water woes would be to ignore patterns of systemic discrimination, say local professors. Local resident says, "One day, it's clear. Other days, it comes out real black." Elevated nitrates that have been found in a few wells likely come from agricultural or septic tanks. Some people in Charleston Park lived in shacks without running water as late as 1988 ([local news](#)).

**Michigan Scrambles to Address PFAS Drinking Water Contamination** ([Michigan Fox News](#)).

**New York City Does Not Need to Filter Its Tap Water** ([NRDC – NY](#)).

**San Francisco's Rainbow Grocery Cooperative's Latest Hot Seller - "Raw Water":** Unfiltered, untreated, unsterilized spring water costs \$36.99 for 2.5 gallons. *"What adherents share is a wariness of tap water, particularly the fluoride added to it and the lead pipes that some of it passes through. They contend that the wrong kind of filtration removes beneficial minerals. Even traditional bottled spring water is*

*treated with ultraviolet light or ozone gas and passed through filters to remove algae. That, they say, kills healthful bacteria — ‘probiotics’ in raw-water parlance ([New York Times](#))."*

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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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