

Rural Water Issues Advisory [1/21/2019]

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New EPA Administrator-nominee Testifies Before Senate and Makes New Drinking Water Regulations the Main Issue ([Senate video excerpt](#)).

- *“U.S. is number one for access to safe drinking water”*
- *“President Trump focused on Americans without access to safe drinking water...”*
- *“Making safe drinking water a priority...”*
- *“We will issue PFAS management plan in the near future... Hosted first ever PFAS summit in May...”*
- *“Updating the Lead and Copper for the first time in over two decades...”*
- *“We are helping communities replace lead service lines...”*

NRWA Urges Congress to Fund \$1 Billion in USDA Rural Water Grants and Loans this Congress:

Last week, the NRWA governing committees approve NRWA funding request levels for this Congress. The \$1 billion request level is consistent with [this year's historic funding level](#) for USDA. Rural Water representatives from every state will be in Washington DC on February 4-6 to report to Congress on what is working in their home districts for drinking water safety and wastewater quality.

On Wednesday, the House Appropriations Committee Passed an Emergency Disaster Bill: The funding is intended to provide relief and recovery assistance for Americans affected by recent hurricanes, typhoons, wildfires, and other natural disasters. In the EPA section of [the bill](#), \$53,300,000 is included for the Clean Water State Revolving Funds and \$296,100,000 for the Drinking Water State Revolving Funds to States in EPA Regions 4, 9, and 10 for water facilities impacted by Hurricanes Florence and Michael, Typhoon Yutu, and calendar year 2018 wildfires and earthquakes.

With EPA Shut Down, Interest Groups and Media Worry that People May Not Protect Their Drinking Water: From the [Nation magazine](#), Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility claims, *“States usually send their water-monitoring samples to EPA laboratories. Currently, however, the agency simply ‘isn’t there to check the data or enforce violations.’ For cases of major lead contamination, ordinarily, ‘if there is an imminent and substantial endangerment, with no action from state or local authorities, the EPA has authority to act. Clearly, this is not happening either.”*

House of Representatives Names Peter DeFazio (OR) and Sam Graves (MO) to Head the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for this Congress: The new leadership provides NRWA with an opportunity to obtain House support for legislation to allow for up to two percent of the Clean Water Act State Revolving Fund to be used for technical assistance in each state. The legislation ([S. 518](#)), sponsored by Senator Wicker (MS), passed the Senate unanimously in the last Congress but was opposed by the previous leadership of the House Committee.

Private Water Companies Cite Study to Promote Private Water Over Public Water: On December 13, 2018, the CEO and president of the National Association of Water Companies (NAWC) commented, *“As a former state utility regulator, I have seen firsthand the harsh realities of what happens when communities are unable to properly manage their water systems, jeopardizing public health and safety. The results of this study further confirm that regulated water companies nationwide are doing a better job than their municipal counterparts in delivering the highest quality water possible... NAWC member companies are well-positioned to bring the expertise and investment troubled systems need to ensure Americans can count on safe and reliable water service ([Businesswire](#)).”*

“Lead Contamination Detected” in New Jersey’s SUEZ Water System, January 18, 2019 ([North Jersey news](#)).

PFAS Nightmare for Alabama Water Utility:

- Companies upstream of West Morgan-East Lawrence water intake used the PFAS chemicals for decades that were detected in the Tennessee River and the water utility.
- The water utility's insurance refuses to cover legal fees or any ultimate liability for the many claims against the authority.
- The water utility is facing financial strain as it prepares to bid on a new filtration system
- The PFAS substances continue to make their way into the river.
- Customers who have sued allege they were unwittingly drinking contaminated water for years, and that they are suffering from cancer and other diseases caused by the chemicals.
- Insurance company claims it is protected by a pollution exclusion clause in the policy to reject coverage.
- Utility may put one line item on the bill that covers just the operation of a new filtration system.
- Chemical company (3M) says it has acted responsibly in dealing with the unregulated chemicals.
- Current carbon filtration effectively removes PFOA and PFOS, but it does not remove numerous closely related chemicals used by industries after PFOA and PFOS were dropped.
- New reverse-osmosis treatment could cost \$25 million ([DecaturDaily](#)).

[National Rural Water Association](#)

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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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