**Congress Ends With Water Bills**: In the final hours of this Congressional session, the Senate passed the ‘‘[Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act’’ -- the ‘‘WIIN Act](http://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20161205/CPRT-114-HPRT-RU00-S612.pdf).’’  The nearly $12 billion measure authorizes 30 new Army Corps of Engineers infrastructure projects around the country and now heads to the President’s desk.  The final House-Senate Conference agreement does include new public notice requirements for exceedances of the lead action level and for distribution of independently conducted lead tap samples results ([text](http://ruralwater.org/lead%20pn%20WIIN.pdf)).  After a successful campaign from South Carolina Rural Water Association ([advocacy](http://ruralwater.org/SCRWA%20WRDA%202016%20Support%20Letter.pdf)), the final House-Senate Conference Committee dropped the changes to the drinking water SRF ranking systems that would have *"reduced the number of small disadvantaged water systems from receiving the necessary funds to initiate such programs."*  The WIIN Act includes a provision intended to limit competition between the new Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation (WIFIA) program and the SRFs; the bill states that *"appropriations made available to carry out WIFIA should be in addition to robust funding for the SRFs... and the appropriations for the SRFs should not decrease for any fiscal year."*  The Act also included a provision to allow tribal organizations' interests to borrow the rural water EPA technical assistance provision that requires EPA to fund the technical assistance that the Indian tribes *"find to be the most beneficial and effective.’*’  This should be helpful for the return of rural water EPA technical assistance if the tribal organizations are successful in having funds appropriated specially for this new authorization.

**Congress Extends Federal Funding until April 28, 2017**: On Friday, the Senate avoided a government shutdown by approving another Continuing Resolution, this time to fund the government through April.  In addition to continuing the funding levels from fiscal year 2016, the bill included new water funding, $100 million to assist Flint, Michigan and $20 million for EPA's new WIFIA program.  The money intended for Flint will be directed to a new program within the SRF that is limited to states for which the President has declared an emergency, and for drinking water systems that have been the subject of an emergency declaration, among other limitations.

**NRWA's Wilmer Melton Represents Small and Rural Communities on EPA Advisory Council:**The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Drinking Water Advisory Council (NDWAC) convened on December 6-7 to advise the Agency on a host of current drinking water issues including the EPA's lead rule, new drinking water contaminants, harmful algal blooms, enforcement policies, the recent National Drinking Water Plan, etc. ([NRWA news](http://www.ruralwater.org/melton%20ndwac.pdf)).

**Small Community in Kansas Wants Trump to Stop EPA Enforcement of Nitrate Standard** ([Hutchinson News](http://www.hutchnews.com/news/local_state_news/pretty-prairie-water-rates-to-go-up---but/article_af3e2b08-11a1-5d81-b02f-be5032f82283.html))

**New State Tests Show Flint's Water within Federal Lead Action Levels**([Mich Radio News](http://michiganradio.org/post/new-state-tests-show-flints-water-within-federal-lead-action-levels" \o "This external link will open in a new window" \t "_blank)).

**Top Headlines for Trump EPA Nominee**([Google](https://www.google.com/search?q=EPA+water&rlz=1C1EODB_enUS523US529&oq=EPA+water&aqs=chrome..69i57j0l3j69i60j0.1862j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#tbm=nws&q=EPA+Trump+Pruitt)):

* *Trump's Picks for EPA and Interior Threaten the Future of Clean Water*
* *Trump's pick of Pruitt to run the EPA spells disaster for the environment*
* *Donald Trump's EPA Pick Is A Leading Foe Of Clean Water Laws*
* *CNN Stokes Fear for America's Air and Water under Trump's EPA*
* *Scott Pruitt, Trumps Climate-Denying EPA Pick, Is Worse Than You ...*
* *Trump's EPA pick seen as a 'sucker punch' to clean water advocates*
* *Liberals Are Freaking Out Over Trump's EPA Pick*

**Trump's EPA Pick Has History of Opposing EPA Regulations**: Bloomberg news reports, *"Scott Pruitt, President-elect Donald Trump's pick to head the nation's top environmental watchdog will be in a prime position to roll back Obama-era agriculture regulations.  Scott Pruitt, Oklahoma's attorney general and frequent critic of the agency he has been tapped to lead, has fought the Obama administration's animal welfare and environmental rules. And if he is confirmed as EPA administrator, Pruitt has indicated that he plans to continue the battle.  'The American people are tired of seeing billions of dollars drained from our economy due to unnecessary EPA regulations, and I intend to run this agency in a way that fosters both responsible protection of the environment and freedom for American businesses,' Pruitt said in a Dec. 8, statement."*