

Illinois Rural Water Association (IRWA) in Discussions with Senator Tammy Duckworth on a Potential U.S. Senate Dear Colleague Campaign to Support USDA Rural Water Funding: IRWA was in DC last week and met with aides to Senator Duckworth about sponsoring a Dear Colleague letter similar to the [letter recently finalized](#) in the U.S. House of Representatives. Senator Duckworth is the ranking Senator on the [Senate Fisheries, Water, and Wildlife Subcommittee](#) which has jurisdiction over the Safe Drinking Water Act. If your Republican Senator is interested in cosponsoring such a letter, please contact us.

Wisconsin Rural Water Association Featured in News Report on USDA Funding Cuts that Includes Interviews with both Wisconsin Senators on the Issue ([news](#)).

President Reiterates, "I'm Committed to Funding a Massive Nationwide Infrastructure Program" on Thursday: The White House has not released details of any plan. Media reports the President's plan is expected to emphasize cost-saving deregulation and public-private partnerships and tolls rather than deficit spending ([CNBC](#)).

Kansas Rural Water Association Analysis Demonstrates Why USDA Funding Works for Rural America and the Limitations of Public-Private Partnerships in Funding Rural Water Projects ([KRWA Financial Analysis](#)).

Utah, Idaho, Alaska, Oklahoma, and West Virginia Rural Water Press for Fix to EPA Technical Assistance Funding: Congress is finalizing the federal spending bills for fiscal year 2017 to avoid a government shutdown by April 28. Reports from Congressional sources close to the negotiations report that the EPA budget may simply extend the previously passed fiscal year 2016 budget (i.e. a long-term continuing resolution). The rural water associations are all urging their Members of Congress on the appropriations committee to fix the current EPA technical funding problem in any continuing resolution by making EPA fund a recently passed technical assistance law ([PL 114-98](#)).

South Dakota Water Customer "Poaching" Case Shows Strength and Necessity of 1926(b): A federal judge has ruled that Watertown (SD) violated federal law by encroaching on the service area of the Sioux Rural Water System. The city argued that state law gave it a right of first refusal to provide service to customers within three miles of its limits – and that the rural water system does not have adequate water supplies or pressure to provide fire protection ([news](#)).

EPA to Use 2 Rulemakings to Repeal and Replace WOTUS: An EPA representative said this last week at an Association of State Wetland Managers meeting. The agency plans to first rescind the Obama administration's contentious regulation and then work on a new definition for waters of the United States. In repealing WOTUS, the agency would revert to a 1986 definition and would also rely on 2008 guidance from the George W. Bush administration about how to apply that definition.

EPA Asks for Comments on Regulatory Reform: On April 13, EPA published a Federal Register Notice asking for comments on “Enforcing the Regulatory Reform Agenda” under President Trump’s Executive Order (EO) 13777 ([EPA announcement](#)). The order directs federal agencies to establish a Regulatory Reform Task Force to evaluate existing regulations and “make recommendations to the agency head regarding their repeal, replacement, or modification.” Comments are due by May 15, 2017. NRWA’s Regulatory Committee will be considering a comprehensive package to submit to EPA on April 29, and the Committee recently sent the EPA a statement recommending two regulatory reform proposals for consideration under the President’s Executive Order ([NRWA](#)).

White House Memo Encourages Early Retirements from EPA ([White House](#)).

EPA Employees Organize to Lobby Congress against Proposed Budget Cuts ([NPR audio](#)).

White House Names Neomi Rao to Head Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) within the Office of Management and Budget (OMB): OIRA oversees the implementation of government-wide policies and reviews draft regulations.

National Rural Water Association

Contact: Mike Keegan, Policy Analyst <keegan@ruralwater.org>
(Washington, DC)