

EPA Can't Consider Risk of Some Drinking Water Violations: EPA told a U.S. Senator last week that the Safe Drinking Water Act "does not allow for consideration" of violations that are so small they don't present a risk to public health. The Senator asked EPA about this issue because alarming EPA mandated public notices are causing the public to turn away from their drinking water.

Senator Inhofe Warns of WOTUS: The Oklahoma Senator and former NRWA Green Key recipient is concerned the EPA's Waters of the U.S. rule could subject sewer and stormwater systems to federal authority under the rule for the first. Inhofe stated in a letter to EPA that *"under your new rule, the Army and EPA are claiming the authority to regulate not only current streams and wetlands, but land where streams and wetlands may have existed long before the enactment of the Clean Water Act... Many stormwater and sewer systems were built in areas that under the new rule may be considered 'tributaries'... Since they are not covered by the exclusions for ditches and stormwater management features, they may be regulated 'waters of the United States' under the new final rule"* ([Inhofe letter](#)).

California's Central Valley Subsistence: The ground is sinking faster than ever in the face of intensified groundwater pumping in the parched agricultural area, according to NASA ([more](#)).

Gold King Mine Spill: Internal documents released late Friday show managers at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency were aware of the potential for a catastrophic "blowout" at an abandoned mine that could release "large volumes" of wastewater laced with toxic heavy metals ([AP News](#)). Western senators demand answers in IG probe of the EPA spill ([more](#)).

EPA Funds Eight Universities and RCAP for Technical Assistance: Under the EPA Environmental Financial Center (EFC) Grant Program, the agency recently named EFCs: University of Southern Maine, Syracuse University, University of Maryland, University of North Carolina/Chapel Hill, Michigan Technical University, University of New Mexico, Wichita State University, CA State University/Sacramento, and RCAC. The programs will build capacity of communities and private parties to: develop, implement, and support sustainable public-purpose water and other environmental infrastructure systems; support environmentally and fiscally sustainable environmental infrastructure, including ensuring the resiliency and security of that infrastructure; provide computer-based and other financial and outreach tools to communities (particularly small and disadvantaged ones) to help them more effectively manage watersheds

and water systems; and improve drinking water and wastewater utility water conservation, energy efficiency, management, and capital planning. Awardees were selected through a competitive grants process.

Wisconsin Watershed Controversy: Wood County Board proposes monitoring of farms' manure and fertilizer use. A coalition of dairy producers has called the measure legally questionable and "potentially counterproductive," while an environmental law firm contends the county is on solid legal ground ([more](#)).

Flaws in SCADA Systems: The Dept. of Homeland Security published six advisories after security researchers from Elastica discovered several remote and local file inclusion, weak password hashing, insecure authentication, hardcoded credentials, weak cryptography, and cross-site request forgery (CSRF) vulnerabilities, among others affecting Web-based Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) human machine interfaces (HMI) used by multiple organizations ([more](#)).

Third Louisiana Public Water Supply Site Tests Positive for Brain-Eating Amoeba ([more](#)).

California Proposal for New Statewide Tax on Water Bills: The Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) is reporting that there are signs that a proposed public goods charge or other tax on water bills could emerge in the state legislature. ACWA states, *"Establishing a permanent statewide tax on water bills under the heading of emergency drought relief is illogical and misleading... a tax on water bills paid by a subset of Californians is not the solution. Further, by redistributing local ratepayer dollars to areas that have been unable to fund water system investments, agencies that already have made significant investments in water efficiency and local water supply needs would be unfairly penalized. A public goods charge on water also would make it more difficult and costly for agencies to fund critical local projects and programs."*

Variable Water Rates: Definition - where higher income households bear a greater burden than lower income households on a community's water obligations. In 2014, EPA released a [Financial Capability Assessment Framework](#). Environmentalists had hoped that EPA would include language on variable water rates in the framework. The framework does not preclude a municipality from implementing such programs, but environmental groups have argued that it might not be in a utility's interests to consider such factors unless there is pressure from EPA headquarters. **Enviros Want to Strengthen Disclosure of RMP Data:**

Green groups are urging EPA in a forthcoming proposal to improve public access to data showing risks from catastrophic chemical releases at industrial facilities, arguing online access would drive facilities to use safer substances. EPA has said it will consider requests for mandating inherently safer technology (IST) as part of revisions the agency is scheduled to propose to its Risk Management Plan (RMP) facility safety program in September. **Frackers Using Wastewater:** A top shale oil producer has signed an 11-year, \$117 million deal with the city of Odessa, Texas that will guarantee it access to millions of gallons of treated municipal wastewater each day for use in nearby oilfields. Deliveries of the so-called effluent are expected to start at the end of the year (more).

National Rural Water Association

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