

# Rural Water Policy Advisory [8/21/2017]

**Kansas Rural Water Association (KRWA) Calls Out Environmental Working Group (EWG) for Misleading Media Report on Drinking Water Quality:** *"In numerous national publications and media, readers are warned of 'dozens of harmful contaminants in tap water.' EWG developed an [online database](#) which allows citizens to enter their zip code and search for their public water system 'to find out exactly which contaminants are in their local water supply.' KRWA started to receive phone calls and emails from water systems and citizens concerned by the information they read on [www.ewg.org](#), so KRWA decided to investigate EWG's tap water database and the accuracy of the data provided. The information is misleading because it uses a much lower 'health guideline' rather than the contaminant levels established by the federal Safe Drinking Water Act as the recognized standard for safe drinking water. For example, Total Trihalomethanes (TTHM) has a 'health guideline' of 0.8 ppb (or µg/L) defined by the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment as a draft public health goal to protect against cancer. The MCL for TTHM is 80.0 ppb (or µg/L). So for one of the PWSs that KRWA reviewed, Jefferson County RWD No. 13, the system's TTHM result of 29.0 ppb is much lower than the MCL but is above EWG's 'health guideline.' In fact, Jefferson County RWD No. 13 has eight contaminants listed on the system's report, but at the top of the report in small print it states that 'this water utility was in compliance with federal health-based drinking water standards.' KRWA's advice to public water systems and their customers who choose to look up their PWS's data on EWG's tap water database – don't let it scare you ([KRWA](#))."*

EWG is [promoting the sale](#) of water filters with EWG [receiving small donations](#) for filter purchases made on Amazon.

***"Last week the entire country was sucker punched by the EWG. They singlehandedly devastated the entire purpose for and the good work done on scores of consumer confidence reports by confusing the public and conflating the distinction between guidelines and MCLs."***

***– George Hanson, Maryland Rural Water Association***

**North Carolina Rural Water Association (NCRWA) on Capitol Hill Raising Concerns with Committee-Passed Bill to Make Significant Changes to the Safe Drinking Water Act:** On July 27, the Energy and Commerce Committee unanimously approved [H.R. 3387](#), the Drinking Water System Improvement Act. In order to attract broad bipartisan support, the bill's sponsors included a number of new SDWA provisions (mandatory consolidation, new monitoring requirements, new security requirements, etc). Last week, NCRWA was on Capitol Hill making presentations to its delegation and raising small and rural community issues with the legislation ([NCRWA](#)). NCRWA's Regulatory Committee will be reviewing these issues this week and discussing the issue with the bill's sponsors. Any changes in the legislation will most likely have to be supported by New York Representative Paul Tonko (ranking member of the subcommittee), Illinois Representative John Shimkus (committee chairman), and Mississippi Representative Gregg Harper (sponsor of the bill).

**Massachusetts Legislation to Require Disclosure of Lead Water Lines with Homes Sales** ([news](#)).

**Poland Spring Water is Deceiving Consumers with Bottled Water that Doesn't Meet FDA's Definition of Spring Water** ([news](#)).

**Claim: “Undermanned” EPA Delays Action on Lead in Drinking Water ([Circle of Blue](#)).**

**Trend – States Setting New Standards for Drinking Water Contaminants:** These new standards include perfluorononanoic acid and trichloropropane in New Jersey ([news](#)).

**Dr. Water attacks President on Water Policy ([The Guardian](#)).**

**President Trump Signs Executive Order (EO) to Speed Infrastructure Development by Streamlining Reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA):** The Trump EO seeks to limit federal agencies' environmental reviews of infrastructure projects under NEPA to two years while establishing a series of “accountability” measures for federal agencies involved in the permitting process. The order also will establish the protocol of “One Federal Decision” for major infrastructure projects under which the lead Federal agency will work with other relevant Federal agencies to complete the environmental reviews and permitting decisions needed for major infrastructure projects ([White House](#)).

#### **National Rural Water Association**

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

[safe [unsubscribe](#) | [subscribe](#)]

***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*

**Reprint Policy:** this report, including any portion, may be distributed publicly without permission or citation.

**Archives:** past editions of this newsletter are available on the internet ([link](#)).