

Flint Update

- **Michigan, EPA Fight Over Drinking Water:** EPA announced in an emergency order Thursday that it plans to take over lead sampling in Flint after sharply criticizing local and state officials in the handling of the city's water crisis, saying repeated delays and a lack of transparency continue to pose "an imminent and substantial" danger to residents ([news](#)).
- **Environmental Groups Use Flint to Stop Beneficial Modifications to Lead and Copper Rule (LCR):** NRWA representatives (John Sasur, MA and Wilmer Melton, NC) were appointed to the EPA committees proposing changes to the current LCR. John and Wilmer were successful in including two important changes to the LCR in the final recommendations that were widely supported (including the Natural Resources Defense Council). A group of environmental organizations is now opposing the proposed changes, however, and specifically targeting the two priority NRWA changes to the LCR while using the Flint crisis as its *raison d'être*. In its [comments](#) to the EPA, the group highlights the NRWA priorities stating:
 1. **"Monitoring:** *The Report recommends replacing the LCR's monitoring program with the following 2-part program: '1) a more robust WQP monitoring program to improve process controls for CCT, and 2) voluntary customer initiated sampling... to provide direct information to consumers that they can use to reduce potential exposures to lead from drinking water... and to provide ongoing information to the PWS to identify and correct unanticipated problems...'* This proposal is deeply misguided."
 2. **"Sample invalidation:** *Under the current LCR, a PWS can request that its state invalidate tap water samples for a limited number of reasons such as damage to the sample container or error in laboratory analysis. The Report asserts that this closed list of sample invalidation criteria leads to instances in which 'samples that are obvious 'outliers' and don't represent the water that is normally consumed and should not be used as a basis for treatment changes or public education' must be accepted. The Working Group urges EPA to 'expand the invalidation criteria' to reflect this concern. This proposal would create an unnecessary and potentially disastrous loophole."*

EPA gets to make the final determination on how the recommendations could become revisions to the LCR.

Public Confidence: Tampa Bay Water Says Problems in Flint, Michigan Couldn't Happen Here ([more](#)).

Turkish Media Reports ISIL Plan to Poison Turkey's Drinking Water with "Tularemia": *Today's Zaman* (Turkish Daily News) reports that a recent intelligence report on the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has revealed its plan to attack Turkey by poisoning the country's water sources and thereby causing the spread of disease throughout the country ([news](#)). California Rural Water Association Water Security Expert Keith Jones cautions, "Often people will discount the ability of tularemia to contaminate a water system at all, much less to a level high enough to cause harm. The Centers for Disease Control indicate humans can become infected with the bacterium *Francisella Tularensis* through several routes including ingestion of contaminated water. The CDC also states that humans can be exposed as a result of bioterrorism. Although tularemia can be life-threatening, most infections can be treated successfully with antibiotics. It's not just the tularemia mentioned originally however, the U.S. Army Chemical and Biological Defense Command have identified numerous agents that could contaminate 1 million gallons of water with less than a quart of the agent and be fatal to humans. There are basically two types of attacks we should consider: Denial of Service and Contamination to Generate Casualties. All attacks, independent of desired effect or success will compromise public trust, which is why water operators should treat this warning with much caution." A 2013 tularemia outbreak in northeastern Turkey was associated with drinking contaminated tap water, affecting 55 persons. Drinking tap water during the likely exposure period was significantly associated with illness. Findings showed the tap water source had been contaminated by surface water, and the chlorination device malfunctioned ([source](#)).

Fixing EPA Funding: Rural Water supreme supporters Senator Wicker, Senator Heitkamp, Congressman Harper, and Congressman Tonko are set to release a letter in Congress urging [full-funding](#) of the recently passed Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act. Last week, Idaho Rural Water Association asked its Congressman, Mike Simpson (ID), to become a rural water champion on the EPA Appropriations Subcommittee ([IRWA](#)).

Florida Vandals Open 20 Lines and Drain 400K Gallons from Drinking Water Supply ([more](#)).

Former Traill Rural Water District (ND) Manager Accused of

Misappropriating \$100K in Funds for the Grocery Store and Restaurants ([news](#)).

Indiana Wants Regional Water District to Charge All Customers the Same Cost for Service: To help, the state has provided a recent \$5 million grant to reduce costs ([news](#)).

Florida Rural Water Association (FRWA) Sues EPA: FRWA filed an [expedited complaint](#) in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida, saying that the EPA Waters of the U.S. Rule "*far exceeds the federal government's powers under the Commerce Clause, fails to afford protections guaranteed by the Due Process Clause, contravenes the Clean Water Act's text, misinterprets U.S. Supreme Court precedent, subverts applicable notice-and-comment requirements, masks its true fiscal impact through a flawed economic analysis, and is otherwise arbitrary and capricious.*" NRWA is filing a similar brief at the national level as soon as that court opens the docket (likely in February).

Water Research Foundation (WRF) and American Water Works Association (AWWA) Request Help from Rural Water Member Utilities: By participating in a research project to help utilities better manage emergencies ([survey request](#)). For more information, see Rural Water Association of Utah [announcement](#).

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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