**NRWA's Fix EPA Funding Campaign Advances**: The House of Representatives’ Energy and Commerce Committee reports,*"On November 18, 2015, the Energy and Commerce Committee unanimously passed S. 611, the Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act.  The legislation helps smaller and rural communities across the country deal with the technical and financial challenges of regulations under the Safe Water Drinking Act* ([more](http://energycommerce.house.gov/press-release/ec-advances-bill-boost-drinking-water-rural-america)).”  The House of Representatives is expected to take up the bill on December 2, 2015.  The Mississippi Rural Water Association’s Executive Director testified before the committee on October 22, 2015 that the bill's "preference provision reduces (or eliminates) the subjectivity for EPA in administering technical assistance appropriations.  It would be a simple exercise for EPA to ask each technical assistance provider competing for funding to simply demonstrate to what extent small community water systems find their proposal to be 'most beneficial and effective' ([Mayfield](http://docs.house.gov/meetings/IF/IF18/20151022/104079/HHRG-114-IF18-Wstate-MayfieldK-20151022.pdf)).”

**Wyoming Association of Rural Water Systems' (WARWS) Advocacy Helps All Rural Water Associations**: Last week, WARWS took the initiative to contact the Senate EPA appropriations committee (Chaired by Senator Murkowski, AK) and urge that the operative provisions of S. 611 be used to implement all EPA technical assistance funding in the next fiscal year.  The committee responded to WARWS that it is aware of rural water's support for S. 611.  The congressional appropriations committees are finalizing this year's appropriations bill this week, and we are in a race to pass S. 611 into law for it to be operative in this appropriations cycle.  Another year of the current EPA discretion in administering funding will be another year of ineffective use of appropriations by the Agency and curtailment of assistance to small and rural communities.  Thank you, WARWS.

**Wyoming and Utah Rural Water Stand Up for the SRFs**: A House-Senate Conference Committee is attempting to finalize a comprehensive transportation bill before the end of the year.  The committee is considering a provision to dedicate more funds to the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (the so-called [WIFIA fix](http://www.nacwa.org/images/stories/public/2015-11-12wifia-fix.pdf)).  WIFIA proponents have told Congress that "WIFIA is for projects that fall outside the scope of the SRFs because of their size and cost..."  However, the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (i.e. the SRF authorization) does not limit eligibility for funding based on size or cost.  New York City is budgeted to receive funding for 25 SRF projects this year; five project costs are over $100 million, and one project cost is over $1 billion ([cite](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B4WSfEVpx5MSdU44UEJ1X1ZYNG1GdHU2T3FkSVpzRVVEYlo0/view)).  This does not account for NYC's wastewater projects.  Moreover, large communities receive the majority of SRF funds.  The SRFs do not give preferential treatment to small communities.  Rather, they target federal water subsidies to the projects with the greatest need (financial and public health need).  Utah and Wyoming rural water associations contacted their Senators on the conference committee in support of the state revolving funds ([Utah rural water](https://drive.google.com/drive/blank?action=locate&id=0B4WSfEVpx5MSN01zTnNTQmUwM3pYSGZKSVkxRUpDbkhmdHJr) and [Wyoming rural water](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B4WSfEVpx5MSaWJ1UzZRZjNGVDdENDF6d2k3WTNPSk1qMVJr/view?usp=sharing)).  If your association would like to stand up for the SRFs, please use the Utah and Wyoming examples with the members of the conference committee.  **Representatives are:** Bill Shuster (PA), John Duncan (TN), Sam Graves (MO), Candice Miller (MI), Rick Crawford (AR), Lou Barletta (PA), Blake Farenthold (TX), Bob Gibbs (OH), Jeff Denham (CA), Reid Ribble (WI), Scott Perry (PA), Rob Woodall (GA), John Katko (NY), Brian Babin (TX), Cresent Hardy (NV), Garret Graves (LA), Peter DeFazio, Jerrold Nadler (NY), Corrine Brown (FL), Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX), Elijah Cummings (MD), Rick Larsen (WA), Michael Capuano (MA), Grace Napolitano (CA), Daniel Lipinski (IL)), Steve Cohen (TN), Albio Sires (NJ) and Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC).  **Senators are:**Inhofe OK), John Thune (SD), Orrin Hatch (UT), Lisa Murkowski (AK), Deb Fischer (NE), John Barrasso (WY), John Cornyn (TX), Barbara Boxer (CA), Sherrod Brown (OH), Bill Nelson (FL), Ron Wyden (OR), Charles Schumer (NY) and Dick Durbin (IL).

**NPR Feature Claims No Keystone Pipeline Means More Water Contamination**:Some worry the Obama administration's decision to reject the Keystone XL pipeline will lead to a significant increase in the amount of crude being shipped by rail ([NPR](http://www.npr.org/player/v2/mediaPlayer.html?action=1&t=1&islist=false&id=456174741&m=456174742)).

**Six earthquakes of magnitude 2.5 or larger have been recorded in Oklahoma**: The Oklahoma Corporation Commission announced Friday plans to shut off four disposal wells within 3 miles of Thursday’s earthquake activity near Crescent ([more](http://www.nssga.org/senate-names-highway-bill-conferees/)).

**Wisc. Legislature Passes Bill to Exempt Purchase of Construction Materials for Municipal Projects from Sales Tax** ([more](http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2015/related/proposals/ab313)).

**Windstorm in Oregon, Idaho, Washington, and Colorado Knocks Out Power for 366,000 Customers** ([more](http://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/3-killed-thousands-without-power-innorthwest-wind-storm/ar-BBn9fxT)).

**Mississippi Rural Water Association Featured in Congressional Town Hall Tele-Conference Call with Congressman Harper with 3,500 Callers**: Congressman Harper (MS) recognized MsRWA and the work it does for small communities.  Also, he expects S. 611 to pass and be signed by the President.

**Supreme Court Review Of Chesapeake TMDL**: Agriculture and homebuilding groups have petitioned for high court review of *American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), et al. v. EPA, et al*., and overturn a July 6 opinion by a unanimous three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 3rd Circuit that deferred to EPA's reading of the CWA to back its authority on the Chesapeake TMDL.

**National Rural Water Association**

**Contact:**Mike Keegan, Policy Analyst <keegan@ruralwater.org>

**(Washington, DC)**

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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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***Archives:****past editions of this newsletter are available on the internet (*[*link*](http://www.ruralwater.org/policy%20advisory.pdf)*).*

**3 Attachments**

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