

RALLY Success: State association representatives met with each of their Congressmen and Senators last week to encourage action on Rural Water funding. All of Rural Water's funding agenda is determined every year by Congress. *It is always about Congress.*

House Passes Lead Rule Legislation: The House of Representatives passed H.R. 4470, the Safe Drinking Water Act Improved Compliance Awareness Act, on Wednesday. The bill must still be considered in the Senate. "The bill wouldn't have prevented the state from making the mistakes it made, but it would have caught it a lot sooner," said the sponsor, Representative Kildee (MI). NRWA's Regulatory Committee is reviewing the legislation for policy positions and association actions. How and what NRWA should say about the legislation is important considering the House passed the bill by a vote of 416-2, and much of the public believes such legislation will make its water safer. The bill makes exceedance of the lead action level similar to a maximum contaminant level violation for purposes of public notice. It also allows monitoring results for compliance conducted by independent interests to become mandatory public notice opportunities for the water utility. Please provide your comments to the NRWA Regulatory Committee ([comment](#)).

The Power of a Hawai'i Rural Water Association (HRWA): HRWA's representative, Congressman Takai is likely to circulate a Dear Colleague letter in the House that supports all rural water USDA priority funding (circuit riders, source water, and grants & loans). This letter will be circulated to all state associations as soon as it is final - and all Members of the House will be able to cosign. A Mississippi Senator is also considering a similar effort in the Senate.

Flint Update: E-mails released show the dialogue among the operator, state regulators, and consulting engineers on foregoing corrosion control ([APnews](#)). Hero activist who exposed Flint said she "bullied" EPA into changing their decision in a Lead and Copper Rule revisions process and EPA capitulated ([more](#)). Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton said, "It isn't right that kids I met in Flint on Sunday were poisoned because their governor wanted to save money" ([NYTimes](#)). Michigan Governor Rick Snyder said, "There were bureaucrats, state government that made mistakes in common sense and judgment, there were mistakes at the EPA."

EPA Releases Budget Request: On Tuesday, the agency released all its funding recommendations for fiscal year 2017. EPA is requesting increases for many of its functions and is requesting a reduction in the

state revolving funds by \$257 million. To help small communities, the agency is requesting the following:

- "for [EPA] Drinking Water Programs by over \$12 million to expand the technical, managerial, and financial capabilities of drinking water systems to reliably provide safe drinking water to their customers now and into the future. This investment... promotes... public and private collaboration."
- "Twenty million dollars and 12 staff will support the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program. The WIFIA program will also work to support investments in small communities and promote public-private collaboration."
- "\$22 million is included through Drinking Water Programs and Surface Water Protection for technical assistance, training, and other efforts to enhance the capacity of communities and states to plan and finance drinking water and wastewater infrastructure improvements."
- "funding for the Environmental Finance program... grants to a network of university-based Environmental Finance Centers which deliver financial outreach services, such as technical assistance, training, expert advice, finance education, and full cost pricing analysis to states, local communities and small businesses."
- "Continue the partnership with the American Water Works Association (AWWA) and the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators (ASDWA) to encourage and support states, drinking water utilities, and local communities in redoubling their efforts to identify drinking water systems vulnerable to threats to source waters, revisit their source water assessments, and take steps to ensure that adequate preventative and response measures are in place."
- "-\$12,700,000 (*reduction*), elimination of the [rural water] grant program since states are best positioned to develop technical assistance plans for their water systems..."

WIFIA Update: The EPA Budget requests \$20 million in EPA water grants funding to start the Agency's new Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program that will provide subsidized low-interest loans to large water projects (including corporately-owned water companies) that can demonstrate an investment-grade rating. The Agency's Budget also requests a reduction of approximately \$257 million for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs). To help understand this new federal water infrastructure program and its impact on the SRF, we are asking any interested university-based academic organization (or expert) the following questions ([Miss. State University](#)). If you have a university-based water expert who would be willing to assist with these questions, please contact [us](#).

Power of a Pennsylvania Rural Water Association: After meeting with the Chairman of the House Clean Water Act committee who was recently appointed to the Speaker's new regulatory reform committee, PRWA forwarded Rural Water's package of regulatory reform ([Reg. Reform agenda](#)) and Rural Water's priority Clean Water Act funding ([CWA agenda](#)). If you have a representative on either the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee or the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee who wants to help your state's small and rural communities, please contact [us](#).

AWWA's Reg. Guru Moves-On: Alan Roberson announces retirement after 25 years of leading the drinking water regulatory agenda for all drinking water organizations. Roberson often helped the small and rural community agenda including DBPs rule negotiations, TCR revisions, LCR rule revisions, and federal security policies. Roberson is photo'd here with NRWA's representatives while negotiating a new TCR rule in 2007 ([5 mins, 20 secs](#)),

U.S. Senator Heidi Heitkamp Announces Rural Water Projects and Rural Water Rally Meetings on Radio: The Senator joins her brother and News & Views host Joel Heitkamp (Joel is a former rural water utility general manager) with good news for water projects in need of subsidization ([broadcast](#)). The Senator talks about rural water preventing any type of lead contamination.

Georgia Schools and Hospitals Closed after High Turbidity ([news](#)). **Louisiana Town Deals with 'Vomit' Tap Water** ([more](#)).

North Carolina Boil Water Advisory Caused Water Main Break by Private Contractor ([more](#)).

National Rural Water Association

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