

Congress Returns to Face End of Fiscal Year, WIFIA, Fixing EPA Funding, Gov't Shutdown, and More: Congress returns to Washington on Sept. 8 after a month-long recess with just a few weeks remaining before the end of the fiscal year. Congress must pass legislation extending the fiscal year beyond Oct. 1 to avoid a government shutdown. The President took to the airways over the weekend to announce he will veto any extensions that contain policy riders and do not remove budget constraints ([more](#)). The federal highway/transportation program is also expiring this fall (Oct. 29). Congress last extended the program in July. The Senate has since passed a long-term transportation authorization bill and now the House may try and pass its own version of a long-term reauthorization before the deadline. The Senate bill includes a provision to repeal the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) prohibition on using tax-exempt financing in combination with WIFIA loans. NRWA has raised concerns with this Senate provision ([more](#)). If you have a House Member who would like to help in this effort, please contact [us](#). Additionally, legislation to fix the EPA technical funding problem likely needs to pass by this fall to be operational for next year's EPA appropriations (FY2016). The legislation has passed the Senate (S. 611). However, it appears the House legislation ([H.R. 2853](#)) is stalled in the House Energy and Commerce Committee over an effort to modify the legislation which effectively kills the legislation for this year.

NRWA Asked to Respond to EPA Senate Statement: In its [response](#) to Senator Wicker about the necessity of Tier 2 public notices for disinfection byproducts violations (DBPs), EPA states that the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) "does not allow for consideration of *de minimis* public health risk above the MCL." EPA SDWA violations data shows the following:

- Most of the violations with a recorded contamination level are for a naturally occurring substance
- 9906 total violations for fiscal year 2014 (FY 2014).
- 5239 have no recorded contaminant level.
- 2648 violations are for total coliform (TCR) which EPA no longer considers a violation or health threat, however, the new policy is not effective until April 2016.
- 1,176 violations are for the arsenic rule, 297 of those violations are for an exceedance equal to or less than 2 parts per billion (PPB).
- 232 violations are for the fluoride rule, 221 of those violations are for an exceedance equal to or less than 2 parts per million (PPM).
- 331 violations are for the gross alpha standard, 204 of those violations are for an exceedance equal to or less than 10 picoCuries per liter (pCi/L).
- 428 violations are for radium 226/228, 206 of those violations are for

- an exceedance equal to or less than 2 pCi/L.
- 262 violations are for the uranium standard, 58 of those violations are for an exceedance equal to or less than 10 pCi/L.
- 2,135 violations are disinfection by-products standards, 477 of those an exceedance include no recorded level, 110 of the 416 violations for the haloacetic acids standards (HAA5) are for exceedances equal to or less than 5 PPB, 174 of the total 1252 violations for total trihalomethanes standards (TTHMs) are for violations equal to or less than 5 PPM.

EPA Touts Flexibilities In Draft Rules For Pharmaceutical

Disposal: On August 31, The EPA signed a [proposed new hazardous waste pharmaceuticals rule](#) under the Resource Conservation & Recovery Act (RCRA). The proposed rule states, *“EPA is proposing a new set of sector-specific regulations to improve the management and disposal of hazardous waste pharmaceuticals at healthcare facilities... This proposed rule also intends to clarify the regulatory status of a major practice used by healthcare facilities for management of unused and/or expired pharmaceuticals, known as reverse distribution.”* Some pharmaceuticals are regulated as RCRA hazardous waste when discarded, but healthcare facilities have reported difficulties in complying with EPA waste regulations for a number of reasons, the new pharmaceutical rule's preamble says. These include: healthcare workers who are not knowledgeable about the RCRA hazardous waste regulations but are often involved in the implementation of the regulations; difficulty in knowing which of thousands of items in its pharmaceutical inventories are hazardous wastes when disposed; and the fact that some active pharmaceutical ingredients are listed as acute hazardous wastes which are regulated in small amounts. EPA says it intends to reduce the amount of pharmaceuticals that are disposed of down the drain and to address the overlap between EPA's RCRA hazardous waste regulations and the controlled substances regulations of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). NRWA, the country's largest water utility association, has long supported polices and initiatives to reduce the amount of pharmaceuticals entering our waterways. NRWA will work to make the new EPA pharmaceuticals rule a success in keeping our drinking and surface water safe and healthy.

EPA, States Spar Over Reach Of Judge's CWA Jurisdiction Rule

Injunction: Chief District Judge Ralph Erickson of the U.S. District Court for the District of North Dakota's Southeastern Division asked the agency and the states suing over the WOTUS rule for briefs by Sept. 1 on whether the judge's order blocking the agency's rule should apply nationwide or

only in the 13 states (more).

President Goes to Alaska and Promotes the USDA Rural Water Initiative ([The White House](#))

MRWA Announces 50th anniversary Celebrations: *"Created in 1966 as the Water District Association of Missouri, MRWA has grown from an organization of approximately 40 utilities representing only public water supply districts, to our present organization of nearly 900 utilities representing not only public water supply districts, but municipalities, subdivisions, schools, and private industry. Several special events are planned for next year's conference including unique giveaways, presentations, and specialized training. As a part of our celebration, we've created a special logo to commemorate the event. The 50th Anniversary Logo incorporates the original hand pump design used in the early MRWA logos with the characteristic waves seen in our present logo. Look for this logo in promotional materials and notices associated with our 50th anniversary."*

New EPA Tool Helps Rural Communities Assess Smart Growth

Opportunities: Many rural communities across the country face challenges in aging populations, lack of quality affordable housing, economic decline, childhood poverty, and depletion of treasured natural landscapes. These rural communities have limited resources and planning capacity to help manage tough growth and development decisions. EPA's new tool, the Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities, responds to these challenges. The tool helps villages, towns, and small cities evaluate their policies to create healthy, environmentally resilient, and economically robust places. By identifying gaps in policies, plans, codes, and zoning regulations, rural communities are better positioned to tailor solutions that meet their particular needs ([more](#)).

Erie County (OH) Rural Water Commission Controversies Playing out in Newspaper:

Article includes stories on defective water lines, improper installation, water rate hike of 10.5 percent, surprise vote to raise the water rates and combine the county's two water districts, decision to skip stone bedding, failure to attract the number of customers predicted, debt of \$12.4 million, \$3 million engineering contract that is called "staggering amount by industry standards," "chameleon accounting," and commission tells reporters "this is our meeting, not your meeting... You don't write up stories, you make them up" ([more](#)).

Gretna (Louisiana) Issues Boil Water Advisory for E.coli: The bacteria was detected during testing ([more](#)).

National Rural Water Association

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