

Rural Water Issues Advisory [11/4/2019]

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House Committee Passes Clean Water State Revolving Fund Reauthorization: On October 29th, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved legislation ([H.R. 1497](#)) to almost double current spending levels for EPA's clean water state revolving fund (SRF) by 2025 as well as allow states the flexibility to extend the term of NPDES permits up to 10 years if both the state issuing the permit and the permittee agreed to the extension and several prerequisite conditions are included in the permit. The legislation requires States to set-aside a minimum of 10 percent of annual SRF funds to provide grants to communities with affordability concerns and establishes minimum funding set-asides to address the water infrastructure needs of small and rural communities ([summary](#) and [text](#) of legislation).

Thank you Senator Inhofe - Chairman Inhofe Drops PFAS Provisions from Defence Bill Proposal: Provisions addressing PFAS cleanup were not included in Senate Armed Services Chairman Inhofe's (OK) "[skinny](#)" NDAA proposal released last week ([Bloomberg](#)). The House passed NDAA bill includes requirements for EPA to list PFAS as "hazardous substances" under the Superfund law resulting in opposition from some senators ([Inside EPA](#)). NRWA and the other national water associations are opposing the Superfund provision in the House bill ([Joint Statement](#), 8/19) that could expose water utilities to liability for PFAS pollution under Superfund authorities.

NRWA and ASDWA: Approximately a dozen state rural water associations' representatives and NRWA staff attended the annual ASDWA conference in Tampa last week. Comments from state agencies included mention of EPA's increased use of federal "emergency authority" to inspect state programs. This provision (section 1431) recently gained attention in the investigation into EPA's authorities to preempt states in the case of Flint Michigan ([NPR](#)). EPA recently updated their [guidance and interpretation](#) of the powers provided to the agency under section 1431.

FDA Announces New Method to Test for PFAS in Food: The agency on [Thursday announced](#) it has a "scientifically validated" method for testing 16 different types of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS in food. Preliminary testing showed extremely high levels of PFAS in chocolate cake. However, FDA determined that "chocolate appears to produce false positives."

The World Health Organization's (WHO) Releases Draft Background Document on Chromium in Drinking Water: WHO has adopted the same approach as Canada, non-mutagenic mode of action for intestinal cancer, noting that the current Guideline Value (GV) of 0.05mg/L is protective of both non-cancer and cancer effects. The comment deadline is November 7th ([WHO](#)).

Weekend Earthquakes Hits Kansas and Oklahoma: A 3.2-magnitude earthquake struck central Kansas on Saturday, with Oklahoma also experiencing a series of small tremors, the Kansas quake hit at 9:08 pm near South Hutchinson, northwest of Wichita, a 3.0-magnitude earthquake hit near Fairview in northern Oklahoma at 1 am Sunday, followed by a 2.6-magnitude quake at 1:37 am near Quinton, 2.7-magnitude tremor rattled Waukomis in northern Oklahoma at 4:25 pm Saturday, according to the USGS.

California Water District to Hold First Board Member Election in 43 Years, This Week: District general manager says district did not hold elections since there were not enough candidates ([news](#)).

Keystone Pipeline Leaks 383,000 Gallons of Oil in North Dakota: The spill coated an estimated half-acre of wetlands. There are no residences near the site and the wetland is not a source of drinking water. The cause will not be known until an internal investigation is complete ([NYTimes](#)).

California Mobile Home Park Ordered to Submit Compliance Plan, Provide Free Alternative Source of Water: Residents say managers raised rent by \$100 to pay for alternative drinking water. EPA says the raised rent is a direct violation of the order ([news](#)). Arsenic levels 2-3 parts per billion above federal standard ([EPA SDWIS](#)). Local newspaper publishes feature on life in the mobile home park; excerpts: “EPA order carries threat of fines up to \$24,000 per day... after EPA order - residents received notice of a rent increase of \$100, residents choose between buying groceries and paying rent... management has posted false claims that their water is safe to drink, EPA says high levels of arsenic can result in acute and chronic health conditions, cancers, heart disease, diabetes and neurological damage... ([Desert Sun](#)).”

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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