

## Rural Water Issues Advisory [4/29/2019]

**EPA Region 6's Rural Water Issues Conference May 21-22:** EPA has [opened registration](#) for the free conference that features rural water issues (DBPs compliance, regulations update, corrosion control, chemistry, Region 6 Administrator update, president of state environmental departments association update, etc.). EPA is working with the state operator certification programs of the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas to provide operator certification credits for attending this meeting ([agenda](#)).

**The Legality of In-home Lead Monitoring:** In response to the EPA's recent announcement of a new Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) coming this summer, John Sasur with Mass. Rural Water and NRWA's representative on the [EPA consultation panel](#) recommending LCR revisions provided the following comment: *"One angle to end in-house testing is in the original SDWA language. The SDWA definition of a Public Water System (PWS) is very vague on purpose. A public water system (PWS) is defined by the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) as 'a system for the provision to the public of water for human consumption through pipes or other constructed conveyances, if such system has at least fifteen service connections, or regularly serves at least twenty-five individuals [Section 1401(4)(a)].' It allows for EPA regulations to be written that require a 'public' water system to test water (for compliance) at the tap. Since there appears to be no limit as to where PWS jurisdiction ends, it is assumed that the PWS is responsible for the quality of water at the last flowing tap, no matter how it was tested or how long it sat in private plumbing, storage tanks, pumps, filters, etc. No other federal regulation that I know of gives such broad responsibility to a regulated entity because of weak regulatory language. I agree with what you said that 'if we want to be rid of in-home tap sampling (used for compliance), we will have to do something different than just ask EPA in this process,' be it in legislation or in the courts. A PWS deserves to know exactly what a PWS is, what it isn't and where its responsibility ends. And you won't get help from EPA or public health groups on clarifying this blurred definition. Since we would have few allies, preference would be the court process. Most importantly, I feel in-house testing for lead will be the precursor for potentially other future PWS in-home testing regimens for contaminants that originate inside building plumbing, such as legionella, bacteria, improper in-home backflows, filters, etc. which a PWS has no control over either."*

**Michigan Releases 11,300 PFAS Locations:** 1,487 fire stations; 27 municipal airports; 519 wastewater treatment plants; and more ([Free Press](#)).

**EPA Release Proposed Groundwater Cleanup Levels for PFAS ([EPA](#)).**

**EPA Releases EPCRA Changes:** EPA recently released a [fact sheet](#) explaining changes to the Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act (EPCRA). The new EPCRA requirements require state and tribal emergency response commissions to notify the applicable state drinking water regulatory agency of any reportable releases and provide community water systems with hazardous chemical inventory data.

**JAMA Study Finds Many Kids in U.S. Never Drink Plain Water:** *“Contaminated water tends to be found in the same low-income communities that have little access to healthy food or safe places to exercise, two factors that also contribute to a higher obesity risk (AZ Central).”*

**Alabama Water Utility’s Settlement with 3M for PFAS Contamination Suit Could be \$30 Million (AP News).**

**Report Shows 239 People Sickened in Utah Fluoride Overfeed:** A February 5 incident in Sandy, Utah sent undiluted hydrofluorosilicic acid from a malfunctioning pump into part of the city’s drinking water system, affecting 1,500 households, schools and businesses. The release happened as a result of a power surge during a snowstorm (KSL News).

**“Stop Pouring Concrete in London’s Sewers”:** A “concreteberg” weighing 105 tonnes and 100-metre-long mass is blocking three Victorian-era sewers in the heart of England’s capital and could take two months to remove (Guardian).

**Flint Five Year Anniversary Focus of Major Media:**

- *“[Activist] does not trust what the government tells her. Flint might get enough national notice over the water crisis to overcome it. Not enough has been done. Seems like nobody can hear us. ‘We don’t trust,’ says the mayor (NYTimes).”*
- *“It is shameful that Flint has gone without clean water for 5 years. Ignoring this crisis means ignoring the real suffering and injustice it has caused residents (Rep. Ilhan Omar).”*
- *“Calls for President Donald Trump to declare another state of emergency for the city, which could make it eligible for additional federal funds. Everyone impacted by the water crisis should be eligible for Medicare (MI Advance).”*
- *“Is the water safe? The answer involves more than chemistry. From fed standards & affordability to reparations & accountability, it is something more complex: the sublime alchemy of justice (WashPost, Dr. Hanna-Attisha).”*
- *“Flint water treatment plant operators never added orthophosphate. That decision was not a mistake. They simply didn’t do it because the state told them don’t do it. Five years later, we have no explanation for the most simple, direct causal fact that led to the Flint water crisis (Nat. Geo.).”*
- *“It will be several years before studies will be able to show whether drinking Flint’s lead-tainted tap water affected the cognitive and behavioral development of thousands of young children (NPR).”*