

Rural Water Policy Advisory [8/13/2018]

How to Make Water Bills Affordable: Maryland Rural Water Association NRWA board member George Hanson attended the [AWWA symposium](#) on "affordability" this week in Washington DC for two days. In Hanson's [comments and notes](#) from the symposium, he stated, "The overarching theme of the event defined 'affordability' as a social requirement for public assistance more than a definition of cost burden... In every case that I heard, the large systems were using rate revenue to subsidize low income households through a variety of formula-based programs... A common inquiry from the attendees seemed to indicate an awareness that there is a moral argument over the propriety of using rate revenue to subsidize low income households. 'It is the definition of reallocation of wealth' was a comment I heard." Please see "Inside EPA's" news report for further coverage of the symposium ([article](#)).

AWWA New Affordability Policy: A policy-making committee recently released a policy position on affordability to be submitted to their board for approval ([AWWA release](#)). NRWA has a seat on the AWWA Water Utility Council (Paul Fulgham with the Rural Water Association of Utah) and will have a chance to be involved with this policy as it advances within AWWA.

Should the Federal Government Mandate Customers Assistance Program (CAPs): Much of the symposium was dedicated to explaining various communities' programs to subsidize the water bills of lower income customers. It seemed implicit in all the presentations that low income customers' water bills should be subsidized by the more affluent in the community. However, the question of whether the federal government should mandate that communities adopt CAPs was not explicitly covered. If you have a comment or position on this questions, please [contact us](#).

Michael Moore's New Documentary about Trump's Election Features Moore Spraying Flint Water on Michigan Governor's Office ([trailer](#)).

EPA Asks If the Models and Data Used to Make Regulations Should be "Transparent": Comments on the [proposal transparency regulation](#) are due by August 16. Recently, a leading epidemiologist raised concerns about a recent study that could be used to support a lower arsenic standard and the lack of transparency. The study, ([Mendez et al., J Expo Sci Environ Epidemiol 2017](#)), analyzes the 4 dose-response slope for certain public health endpoints for drinking water standards using data from the The National Cancer Institute and the U.S. Geological Survey. The conclusion of this study could influence the current Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) Program that is developing an updated assessment of inorganic arsenic. However, the Mendez complete data set includes some data that is available to government agencies but not to the general public. Release of this data would allow for further assessment and demonstrate the repeatability of conclusions and comparisons to similar studies.

Lead in Drinking Water May Not Work: Researchers from Louisiana State University recently published their findings in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health ([Fox News](#)).

New York AG to Probe New York American Water for "Consumer Fraud" in High Water Bills: "The basic charge of the attorney general is consumer fraud and I think this very well might have been a case of consumer fraud," said Governor Cuomo last week. Cuomo's comments and the attorney general's probe come as American Water customers on Nassau's North and South Shores have been calling for a public takeover of their water supply after complaints of high bills ([Newsday](#)).

Numerous Water Organizations File PFAS Comments to EPA: In response to EPA's May 22 [National Leadership Summit](#) on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), many water organizations petitioned EPA on how to implement a national PFAS program:

- Association of State Drinking Water Administrators ([comments](#))
- Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies ([comments](#))
- National Association of Clean Water Agencies ([comments](#))
- New Hampshire organizations including Granite State Rural Water ([comments](#))
- State of New Jersey ([comments](#))
- Ohio environmental organization ([comments](#))