

Rural Water Policy Advisory [9/25/2017]

NRWA's WaterPro Conference Concludes: Attendees heard updates on wide range of topics from high ranking federal officials in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and other agencies.

- Attendees celebrated the success of NRWA's grassroots campaign to persuade Congress to save the USDA rural development funding initiatives (see [video documentary](#)).
- The Regulatory Committee passed a motion to seek changes to the "[mandatory consolidation provision](#)" passed in June by the House Energy and Commerce Committee in H.R. 3387, "The Drinking Water Systems Improvement Act of 2017."
- The Regulatory Committee also passed a motion to craft comments to the U.S. EPA in support of state sovereignty as the agency considers how to define what are the "Waters of the United States" ([NRWA comments](#)).

Florida Rural Water Association's Update on Irma Recovery Efforts ([FRWA](#)).

Kansas Rural Water Association (KRWA) to Testify before House of Representatives on Thursday:

KRWA's General Manager, Elmer Ronnebaum has been invited by the Senate Agriculture Committee to testify in this Thursday's hearing titled, "*Rural Development and Energy Programs: Perspectives for the 2018 Farm Bill*" ([Senate Committee notice](#)).

Rural Water Clean Water Act Technical Assistance Bill (S. 518) Ready for Senate Action: S. 518, Senator Wicker (MS) and Heitkamp's (ND) "*Small and Rural Community Clean Water Technical Assistance Act*," has been cleared for full Senate consideration. Last week, NRWA was notified that only one Senator, Mike Lee (UT), had placed a "hold" on the bill which would keep it from a simple unanimous consent vote in the Senate. Senator Lee raised a concern that the legislation would provide "duplicative" assistance." Utah Rural Water immediately engaged the Senator to explain that there is no other similar EPA-supported wastewater technical assistance initiative.

Study Linking Lead Levels in Flint to Reduced Pregnancies and Fetal Deaths: Researchers with the University of Kansas and West Virginia University found that fertility rates among Flint women decreased by 12% and fetal deaths increased by 58% between April 2014 and the end of 2015 ([news](#)).

House Republicans to Release Tax Bill: The GOP Members will caucus next week in anticipation of releasing their tax reform package soon afterward. NRWA is closely monitoring the formation of the tax package to ensure it contains no adverse changes to water utility tax exempt finding authorities ([news](#)).

EPA Begins Review of Possible New Drinking Water Contaminants: On September 18th, EPA announced the start of the review process under Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) for three chemicals: ethylbenzene, nitrate and nitrite, and chloroform. This is the first step in a process that will likely take several years. EPA's Third Six-Year Review of Existing Drinking Water Regulations was published on January 11, 2017 and their Fourth Six-Year Review is scheduled to be published sometime in 2018.

Suspect Attempted to Poison Drinking Water of 4,000 Children in India with Rat Poison ([news](#)).

Nestlé Makes Billions Bottling Water It Pays Nearly Nothing For: "*The company's operation in Michigan reveals how it's dominated the industry by going into economically depressed areas with lax water laws*" ([Bloomberg](#))."

Sewer in London's East End Menaced by Giant Fatberg: A massive blockage of congealed grease and debris that has been discovered in a portion of London's 19th century sewer system is expected to take three weeks to remove using hand tools and water jets ([NYTimes](#)).

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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