

**Senators Wicker (MS), Heitkamp (ND), Barrasso (WY), Duckworth (IL), Boozman (AR), and Enzi (WY) Finalize Letter to New EPA Administrator Urging a Fix for EPA Technical Assistance Initiative:** The six senators completed a letter on Friday that urges the EPA Administrator to use his discretion to award technical assistance funding through authorities under the Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act (PL 114-98). In December 2015, Congress unanimously passed and the president signed the Act which directs the EPA to provide on-site technical assistance in a manner that is most effective to small and rural communities. The letter states, *“By following the authorities under the Act, we are hopeful on-site technical assistance can be reestablished in our states and ultimately make the program more effective and easier for the EPA to implement.”*

**U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Issues Memo Prohibiting Clean Water Act Citizen Suit Settlement Payments to Nongovernmental Entities that are not a Party to the Litigation:** The [DOJ June 7<sup>th</sup> memo](#) was issued by Attorney General Jeff Sessions. The memorandum also raises significant questions about how the EPA will handle environmental settlements under the Trump Administration as well as how DOJ will approach settlements resolving citizen suits. DOJ intends to curtail the availability of Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEPs) and organizational community service projects involving payments to third parties. The new policy permits only payments to NGOs that “directly remed[y]... harm to the environment.”

**Kentucky Rural Water Takes the Lead on Water System Regionalization Partnerships:** According to the sponsors, *“Partnerships are gaining ground as a useful option for struggling systems to improve their ability to protect public health through providing safe drinking water. As the states, Congress, the Administration, and civic leaders grapple with aging infrastructure and rising costs associated with maintaining the nation’s 53,000 community water systems, there is an increased call for more partnerships and consolidation of America’s highly fragmented water sector. The National Association of Water Companies (NAWC) and Gary Larimore, Executive Director, Kentucky Rural Water Association, will host a June 22, 2017 webinar on how the Federal and state governments worked closely with cities, local leaders and stakeholders to incentivize the consolidation of many of Kentucky’s water and wastewater systems ([Registration](#)).”*

**Food & Water Watch Urges Congress to Reject Any Plans to Privatize Water Infrastructure:** *“Americans lose when control of critical assets like our water and roads is given over to Big Banks and corporations. Rates increase while quality decreases and jobs are lost. Trump’s focus on private financing for infrastructure fails to adequately address the unique needs of rural communities, ultimately leaving them high and dry ([Food and Water Watch, June 5th](#)).”*

**Senate to Consider Legislation to Create New Rural Water System in Montana and North Dakota ([U.S. Senate](#)):** This effort to expand U.S. Bureau of Reclamation rural water funded projects is occurring at the same time the Bureau is telling stakeholders they have no more funding for rural water projects ([news](#)).

**New Report Shows 15 Million People Served by Drinking Water Systems Contaminated by PFOA and PFOS ([Time](#)).**

**Congressman Morgan Griffith (VA) Sends Persuasive Letter to Appropriations Committee Explaining the Need for USDA’s Rural Water Program ([Rep. Griffith](#)).**

**Vermont Rural Water Featured at Workshop for Protection of Current and Future Sources of Drinking Water ([news](#)).**

**The White House Thinks it can Sell DC Pre-Civil War, Original Drinking Water Supply Aqueduct for Over \$100 million ([Wash Post](#)).**

**President Trump Wants “New Council” to Help Infrastructure Project Navigate the Bureaucratic Maze:** At an announcement on Friday, the President announced a concept that would improve transparency by *“creating a new online dashboard, allowing everyone to easily track major projects through every stage of the approval process.”*

**Hard Times Come to Much of Rural America:** Scarcity of capital for small businesses has accelerated the crisis described in “Rural America Is the New ‘Inner City’” by the [Wall Street Journal](#).