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WATER INDUSTRY NEWS, AWARDS, AND TRAINING

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LEAD AND COPPER RULE REVISIONS

AWWA Lauds Proposed LCR as “Significant Step”

AWWA submitted formal comments Feb. 6, 2020, on proposed Long-Term Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) revisions (<https://bit.ly/2IJ4lFb>) that the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) issued Oct. 11, 2019. AWWA CEO David LaFrance touched on some key comment highlights in a statement (<https://bit.ly/2UHqnPt>), noting the proposed rule “represents a significant step forward for public health protection.” In celebrating the progress of the proposed rule, LaFrance also noted that AWWA calls on USEPA to make several important improvements to the proposal and move forward quickly to finalize the rule. Notably, AWWA’s comments spoke to the proposed LCR revisions’ guidelines around lead service line inventories and replacement, schools and childcare facilities, and corrosion control.

“The removal of all lead service lines cannot be accomplished without a spirit of community collaboration and shared responsibility among water utilities, property owners, manufacturers, state regulators, federal agencies, financing authorities, plumbers, code officials, local government, and many others,” stated LaFrance. “It will take time, coordination, and money. But ultimately, the best way to protect people from lead in water is to remove the sources of lead. The water community stands ready to embark on this next frontier of lead risk reduction.”

SOURCE WATER QUALITY

Marine Debris Removal Bill Passes US Senate

On Jan. 22, 2020, the US Senate passed legislation S. 1982 (<https://bit.ly/3crjqYT>), which takes a broad approach to removing debris, particularly plastics, from waterways. The Save Our Seas 2.0 Act passed under unanimous consent and would create grant programs for states and units of local government, including drinking water and wastewater utilities, to help remove or reduce debris from water. The bill would also require the US Environmental Protection Agency to submit a report to the US Congress by January 2023, assessing the value of converting the grant program to a revolving loan fund program for waste management. Senate Bill S. 1982 would authorize \$55 million annually for the state program for fiscal years 2021 through 2025 and \$10 million a year each for the drinking water and wastewater grant programs. No funding would be allowed unless the existing drinking water and wastewater State Revolving Fund programs will have received at least the same amount of money as they received in FY2019.

EVENTS

Education and Training Opportunities

AWWA events set the industry standard in continuing education and cover the full spectrum of water industry topics. Events provide networking opportunities, and many offer CE credits and PDHs. Visit www.awwa.org or call (800) 926-7337.

CONFERENCE

June 14–17 [Annual Conference and Exposition \(ACE20\)](#), Orlando, Fla.

WEBINARS

On Demand [Utility Actions to Sustain Operations During COVID-19](#) (free at www.gotostage.com/channel/awwa-covid-19)

April 22 [Drought Preparedness and Response](#)

April 29 [Innovation Roadmap for Utilities](#) (sponsored)

May 27 [Cross-Connection Control](#)

ONLINE COURSES

On Demand Visit www.awwa.org/onlinecourses to see all online learning options, including training, professional development, and CEU opportunities.

US GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Technical-Advisor Group for Climate Resilience Urged

The US Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report (<https://bit.ly/2PDxDbK>) on Jan. 16, 2020, that recommends the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) identify technical-assistance providers and gather them into a network to assist drinking water and wastewater utilities nationally in incorporating climate resilience measures into infrastructure projects. The report noted that USEPA’s existing program for such efforts is small and can’t provide help widely across the country. GAO also recommended that Congress consider requiring climate resilience to be considered in planning for federally funded water infrastructure projects.

PHOTOGRAPH: HUNTER BLISS IMAGES, WWW.SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

RISK COMMUNICATION

AWWA Releases Guide to Help Utilities Build Public Trust

In today's digital media environment, AWWA continues to develop and provide resources to utilities to help them improve their crucial public outreach and educational efforts. The association knows water utilities must build public trust through frequent, proactive communications and be prepared for media events that can threaten important relationships with customers and the public. To help utilities better understand and succeed in this new communications culture, AWWA recently released a new guide, *Trending in an Instant: A Risk Communication Guide for Water Utilities*. As an AWWA membership benefit, utility members can download the detailed 80-page guide at AWWA's Communications & Outreach webpage (<https://news.awwa.org/comms-outreach>). An executive summary edition (<https://news.awwa.org/trending-summary>) is available to all AWWA members.

AMERICA'S WATER INFRASTRUCTURE ACT

AWWA Releases Report on Critical-Infrastructure Information

To provide water utilities with a summary of state-level protections, AWWA released *Protecting the Water Sector's Critical Infrastructure Information* (<https://news.awwa.org/2Tgs9Vi>). As AWWA's Feb. 20, 2020, utility advisory notes, the report is available for utilities to review in preparation for complying with Section 2013 of America's Water Infrastructure Act (<https://bit.ly/3cbnyw3>). The report provides excerpts of the relevant statutory text from the act that addresses the protections provided for utility information that may be included in a risk-and-resilience assessment and/or an emergency response plan. See at the full advisory at www.awwa.org/utilityalerts for additional details.

PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS

Access Available Resources to Manage Novel Coronavirus Outbreak

To help utilities manage concerns about the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, AWWA has issued advisories with resources for water utilities about managing potential operational issues and responding to customer inquiries about water safety. These include a Feb. 28, 2020, utility advisory and a March 12, 2020, public affairs advisory (read both at www.awwa.org/utilityalerts). The advisories include US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), and Public Health Agency of Canada guidance. According to all three agencies, risk to water supplies from COVID-19 is low, and it remains safe for citizens to use and drink tap water.

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic (<https://bit.ly/2TKJlhv>). AWWA has several key resources to ensure water utilities are prepared: *Business Continuity Planning for Water Utilities: Guidance Document* (<https://bit.ly/2wVutJB>) from Water Research Foundation; "Water System Preparedness and Best Practices for Pandemic Influenza" (<https://news.awwa.org/33arbyo>), from *Journal AWWA*; ANSI/AWWA Standard G440, Emergency Preparedness Practices (<https://news.awwa.org/G440>); and AWWA Manual M19, *Emergency Planning for Water and Wastewater Utilities* (www.awwa.org/m19).

CDC and USEPA posted Q&As (<https://bit.ly/38NuUD0> and <https://bit.ly/2TYRcg0>, respectively) on water transmission and COVID-19. Utilities can also consult frequently updated COVID-19 information posted by CDC (<https://bit.ly/2vRwXZG>) and Public Health Agency of Canada (<https://bit.ly/2TZvXul>). According to CDC, COVID-19 transmission risks are spread mainly person to person, between people in close contact (within about six feet of each other), and via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Those nearby might be infected by such droplets through inhalation or direct contact with facial mucous membranes.

The CDC's FAQ page (<https://bit.ly/CDC-FAQs>) answers questions about the potential for workplace exposure to COVID-19. Also, Stantec released a white paper (<https://bit.ly/3cX6bQi>) related to the new outbreak for water and wastewater treatment professionals, and the Water Environment Federation released *The Water Professional's Guide to COVID-19* (<https://bit.ly/2QpP2VN>) as well as the recording from its Feb. 25 "Updates on Novel Coronavirus for Water Professionals" webcast (<https://bit.ly/3aPniBp>). The US Occupational Safety and Health Administration also has posted a COVID-19 webpage (<https://bit.ly/2U1mToU>). Direct COVID-19 questions to Kevin Morley (kmorley@awwa.org), AWWA's federal relations manager.