2024 Government Affairs Report

Water Quality Association

50 YEARS

Table of Contents

Water Resources Congressional

*Click the orange bubble in the top corners for additional information

Water Quality® ASSOCIATION

MISSION

The recognized resource and advocate for the betterment of water quality

VISION

Improving awareness and knowledge of water quality to enhance quality of your life through sustainable technologies and services

GOAL 1	Advancing knowledge and professionalism of industry participants
GOAL 2	Increasing advocacy
GOAL 3	Driving public awareness and knowledge

Meet Our Team

Jeremy Pollack
Director of Government Affairs

Named Top Lobbyist of 2024

THE HILL

Paige O'Malley
Government Affairs Manager

Water Quality Association

Committee Leadership

In 2024 the Federal Government Affairs Committee and Regional & State Government Affairs Committee merged to form one WQA Government Affairs Committee, overseeing the member advocacy and leadership.

David Nelsen
BOD LIAISON

RJ Easton
CHAIR

Nichole Pennisi
VICE-CHAIR

Water Quality Association

Legislative Highlights

278

Bills Tracked

47

Bills Signed into Law

150+

Policymaker Meetings

25+

Advocacy Letters Sent

Water Quality Association

Government Affairs

Why is it important?

- Builds connections with policymakers & influencers
- Provides important technical information to aid decision-making
- Raises awareness of issues of concern to WQA members
- Reinforces that WQA & its members are the “go-to” technical resource for water treatment issues

Providing Value

UNDERSTANDING TRENDS

LCRI & PFAS Rules from the EPA driving awareness.

FOSTERING GROWTH

CA Safer Program - $130 million per year for water quality which includes POE/POU technology.

DRIVING CHANGE

Overturned a provision in the City of Houston's specialty plumbing code that mandated a double-check valve assembly for all water softeners.

NAVIGATING BARRIERS

WA State requires a specialty plumbing license for the sale and/or installation of the POU/POE systems.

Water Resources Congressional Summit

Day 1 – Educational Sessions

- Hosted on the Capitol grounds for the first time in the House Rayburn Building!
- WQA & NGWA partnered together to provide programming for over 70 attendees.

Educational Highlights

- Keynote Speakers
  - USDA Deputy Sec. Xochitl Torres Small
  - Bruno Pigott, EPA Office of Water
- Sessions & Panels
  - SDWA 50th Anniversary - ASDWA
  - Congressional Staff Panel

48

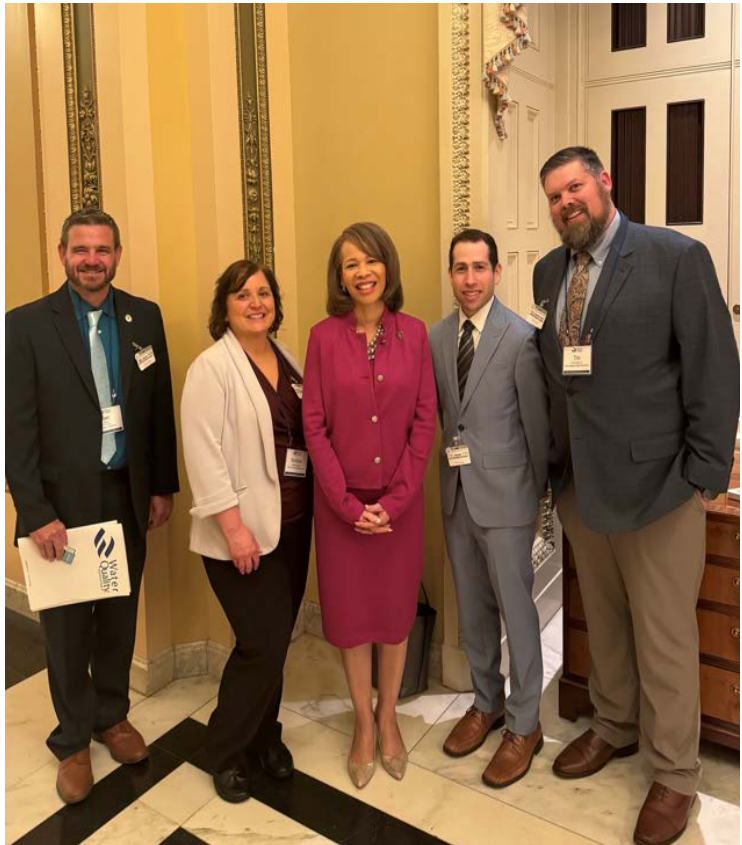
WQA Members Registered

Water Resources Congressional Summit

Day 2 – Congressional Fly-In

68 Congressional Meetings

14 Member Level &
16 with Leadership offices



Tools & Resources

- Government Outreach Meeting Guide
- Government Outreach Slide Deck
- Fact Sheets
- An Introduction to WQA (Protecting the Public)
- The Final Barrier
- Water Treatment for Dummies
- REACH Toolkit

Water Quality Association

New - Tools & Resources

WQA Released Informational Handouts in 2024:

- *Build America, Buy America (BABA): Applicability to POU/POE Systems*
- *Using Water Treatment Systems for SDWA Compliance*
- *FAQs on New Lead Regulations (LCRR & LCRI)*

Water Quality Association

Support Provided

- **Association Benefits**
  - ➢ Monthly Newsletter
    - Bills list and tracking
    - Local /State/Federal Updates
  - ➢ Advocacy Toolkit and Handouts
    - Visit wqa.org/advocacy

- **Association Assistance**
  - ➢ Government Outreach Training & Meeting Prep
  - ➢ Letters Related to WQA's Public Policy Priorities
  - ➢ Testimony and Comments
  - ➢ Preparation for Hearings and Public Forums

Government Affairs Staff Support: GovAffairs@WQA.org

Federal Affairs

Healthy H2O Act

Goal: Assist rural and underserved communities by authorizing a Federal grant program to help cover the costs of water quality testing and the purchase, installation, and maintenance of certified POU/POE water treatment systems.

Why? 23 million U.S. households rely on private wells for drinking water which are not subject to the same regular oversight and testing [as public water] for contamination, which can delay the identification and response to health threats.

MyPlate Initiative

Goal: To add a symbol for water to the MyPlate dietary guidance graphic. The MyPlate nutrition graphic is a cornerstone nutrition teaching tool in schools and childcare.

Why? Inclusion of water on MyPlate would increase knowledge among those segments of the population that are most vulnerable, including young people.

"Water—whether tap, bottled, or filtered—is essential to life. Public health experts widely recognize water as a preferred source of hydration." –MyPlate Support Letter

Counterfeit Products

Exhibiting at the U.S. Capitol!

WQA partnered with the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers (AHAM) and several other organizations to educate policymakers about the dangers of counterfeit products. WQA showcased information from the **"Filter it out" campaign** that was based on research conducted by AHAM and the Water Quality Research Foundation. Speakers included Congressmen Darrell Issa (CA) and Ben Cline (VA), and Dawn Nelson from the Department of Homeland Security.

Advocating for more Protections! WQA signed a Plumbing Industry Leadership Coalition (PILC) letter to Amazon regarding potential counterfeit, non-compliant, and potentially dangerous products being sold on the marketplace.

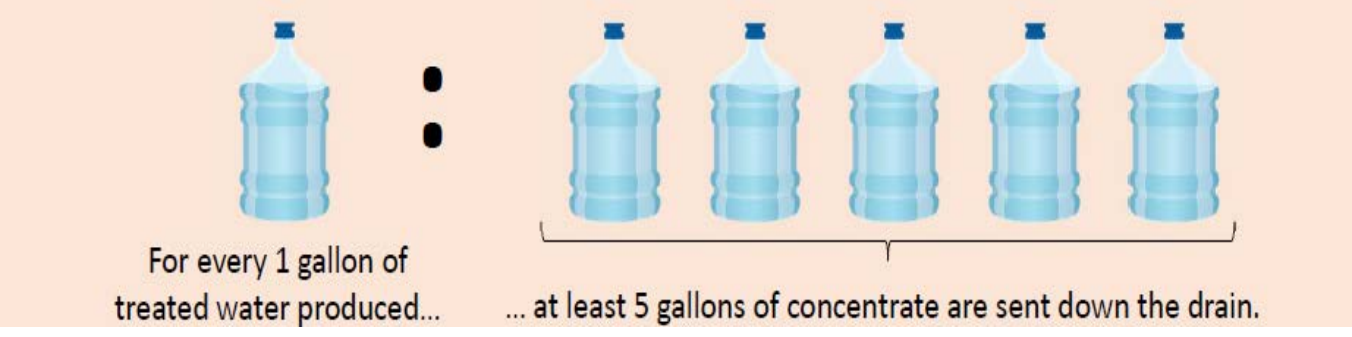
To read the letter, **click here**.

FIFRA

2021	In 2021, WQA launched the FIFRA Taskforce; charged with exploring the regulations through a technical analysis, comparing industry standards, and assessing alternative pathways to compliance.
2022	In 2022, the taskforce with more than 30 coalition partners, sent the EPA a proposal to modernize the enforcement of the regulations pertaining to specific water filtration systems regulated under FIFRA.
2023	In 2023, WQA and taskforce members met with the EPA to discuss the *Alternative Compliance Pathway* proposal. The taskforce began gathering information to understand the costs associated with compliance.
2024	In 2024, WQA and taskforce members used a survey to gather information that covered the financial, time, and material impact of the regulation. These findings were presented to the EPA as they consider a potential new rulemaking.

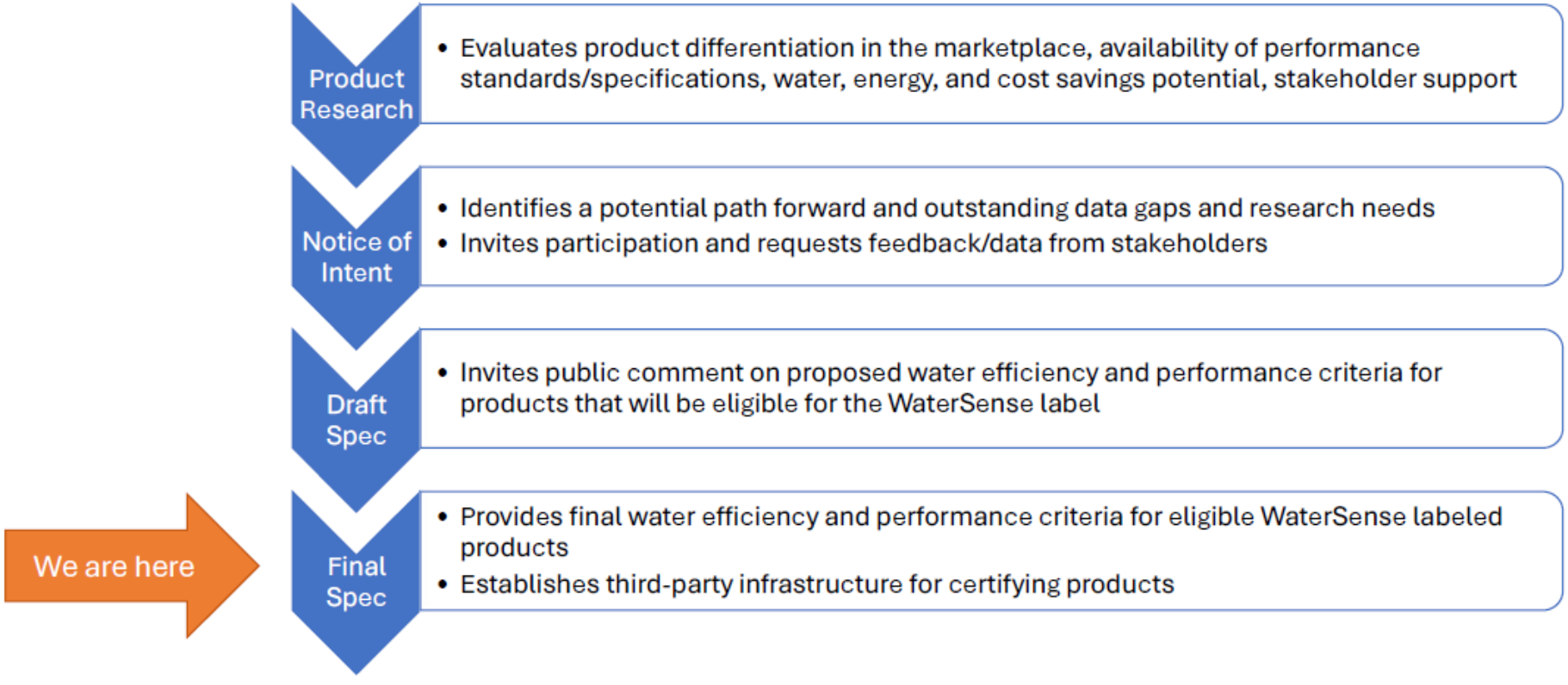
EPA - WaterSense

- A typical residential POU RO system will generate five or more gallons of concentrate for every gallon of permeate produced.



- The EPA's voluntary WaterSense program developed specifications that will help consumers distinguish RO systems that operate with greater water efficiency, while still providing the water treatment that consumers expect.

EPA - WaterSense



New Specifications: Point-of-use RO system must meet specific criteria set by the EPA, ensuring it produces high-quality drinking water while significantly reducing water waste by sending no more than 2.3 gallons of water down the drain for every gallon of treated water produced, making it significantly more water-efficient than a typical RO system.

Lead Policy & Regulations

1991

EPA published the LCR

Established an MCLG of Zero and Action Level (AL) for Lead at 15 ppb.

2000

Minor revisions addressing implementation issues.

2004

Minor revisions addressing technical changes to the rule.

2007

Short-term revisions to enhance the monitoring, treatment, customer awareness, and lead service line replacement.

2014

Flint Water Crisis

2021

Trump Admin – Lead & Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR)

Compliance Date: Oct. 16, 2024

2023

Biden Admin proposed the Lead & Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI)

Final ruling issued Oct. 8, 2024; effective 3 years later.

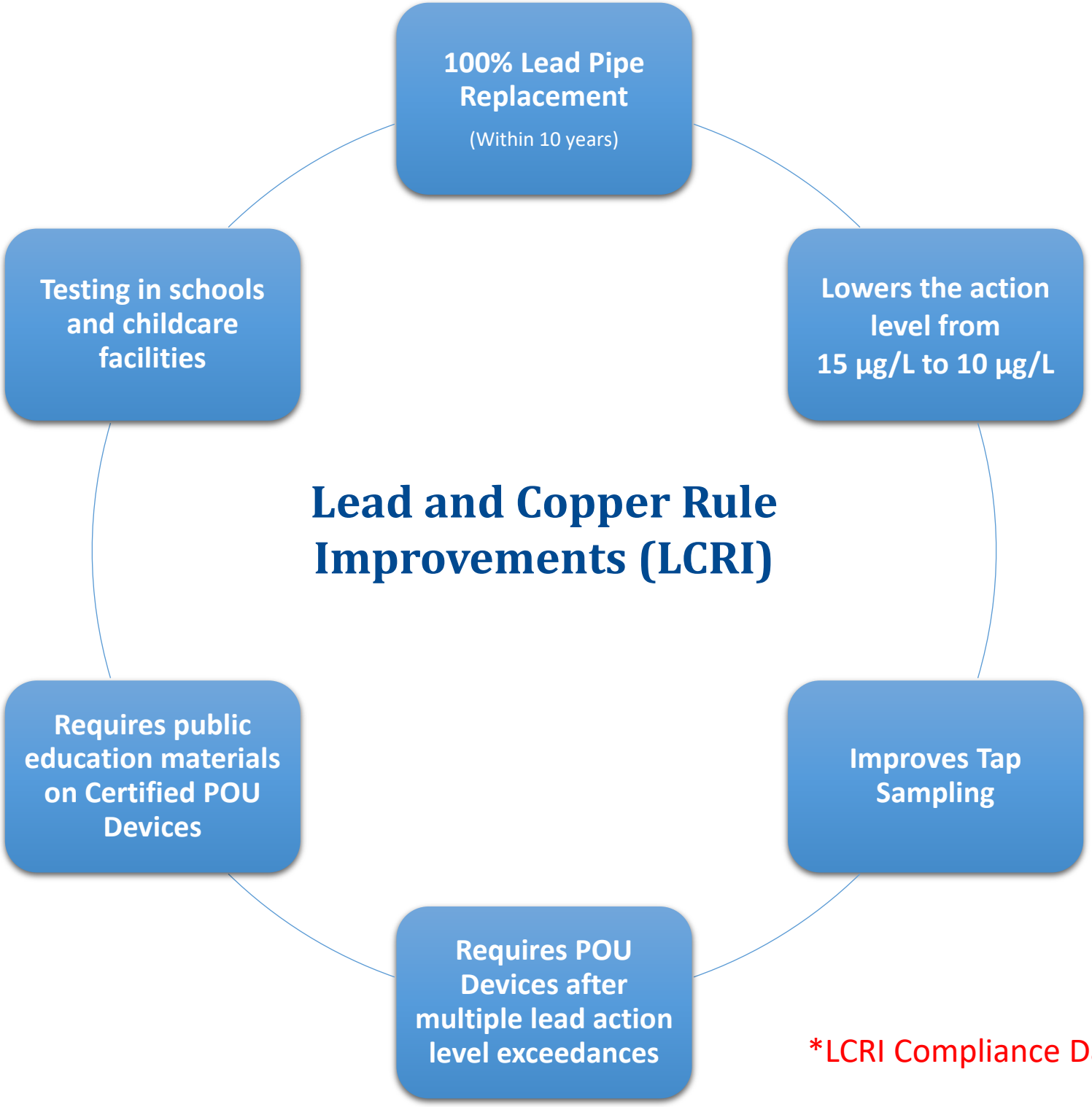
Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR)

The Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR) included four major requirements for public water systems:

- Develop a lead service line (LSL) inventory and make it publicly available.
- Help water systems develop an LSL replacement plan.
- Sample schools and childcare facilities for lead and copper.
- Communicate with the public about the LCRR's requirements and the steps water systems take to meet them.

*LCRR Compliance Date: October 16, 2024

Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI)



*LCRI Compliance Date: 2027

PFAS Regulations & Actions

EPA's NPDWR for PFAS

EPA published a National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR) to establish legally enforceable levels, called Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs), for six PFAS in drinking water.

Compound	Final MCL (enforceable levels)
PFOA	4.0 parts per trillion (ppt)
PFOS	4.0 ppt
PFHxS	10 ppt
PFNA	10 ppt
HFPO-DA (commonly known as GenX Chemicals)	10 ppt
Mixtures containing tow of more of PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA, and PFBS	1 (unitless) Hazard Index

Regulatory Timeline: Finalized in early 2024 and implemented in 2027/2029.

EPA's NPDWR for PFAS

What does it include?

- The proposed rule requires public water systems to:
  - ✓ Monitor for these PFAS by 2027
  - ✓ Notify the public of the levels of these PFAS by 2027
  - ✓ Reduce the levels of these PFAS in drinking water if they exceed the proposed standards by **2029**.

Cost of Compliance?

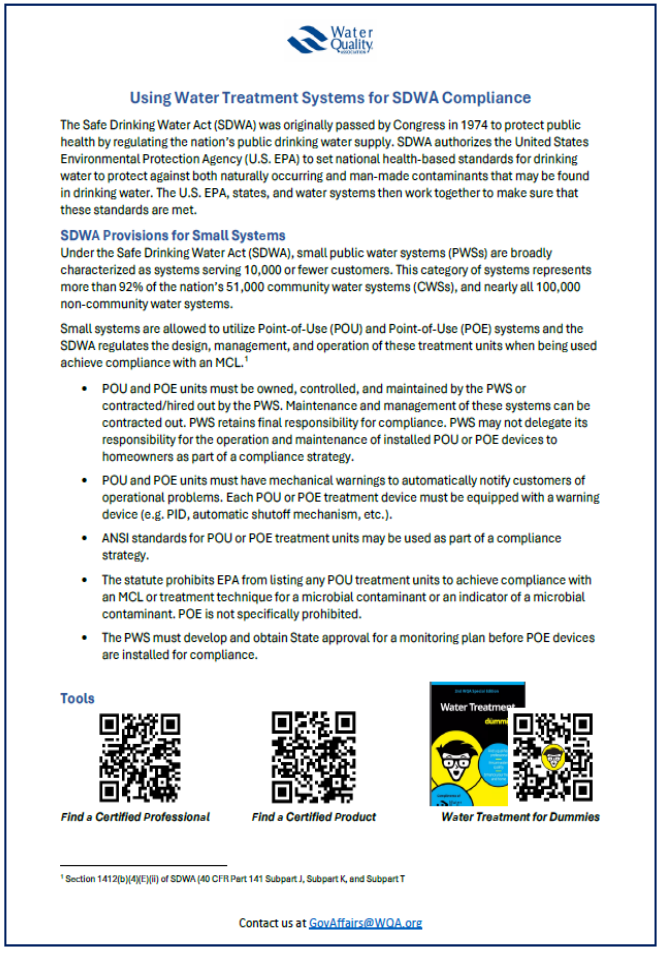
Total Annual Cost per Household for Candidate Technologies

System Size (Population Served)	GAC	IX	RO	POU
25-500	$607 to $1,241	$563 to $990	$4,332 to $5,224	$345 to $357
501-3,300	$203 to $484	$171 to $351	$721 to $1,324	$327 to $ 327
3,301-10,000	$178 to $417	$145 to $284	$388 to $544	Unavailable

SDWA – Small System Compliance

- As the EPA has finalized new rules for PFAS and Lead, several utilities have engaged with WQA members about using water treatment as a compliance mechanism
- For POU and POE systems, many states have administered additional requirements when utilizing them for compliance.

WQA has created a new handout to help educate state drinking water officials and other trade groups on the SDWA and has developed a course available on municipal water!



Water Quality Association

Using Water Treatment Systems for SDWA Compliance

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) was originally passed by Congress in 1974 to protect public health by regulating the nation's public drinking water supply. SDWA authorizes the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) to set national health-based standards for drinking water to protect against both naturally occurring and man-made contaminants that may be found in drinking water. The U.S. EPA, states, and water systems then work together to make sure that these standards are met.

SDWA Provisions for Small Systems

Under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), small public water systems (PWSs) are broadly characterized as systems serving 10,000 or fewer customers. This category of systems represents more than 92% of the nation's 51,000 community water systems (CWSs), and nearly all 100,000 non-community water systems.

Small systems are allowed to utilize Point-of-Use (POU) and Point-of-Use (POE) systems and the SDWA regulates the design, management, and operation of these treatment units when being used achieve compliance with an MCL.[1]

- POU and POE units must be owned, controlled, and maintained by the PWS or contracted/hired out by the PWS. Maintenance and management of these systems can be contracted out. PWS retains final responsibility for compliance. PWS may not delegate its responsibility for the operation and maintenance of installed POU or POE devices to homeowners as part of a compliance strategy.
- POU and POE units must have mechanical warnings to automatically notify customers of operational problems. Each POU or POE treatment device must be equipped with a warning device (e.g. PID, automatic shutoff mechanism, etc.).
- ANSI standards for POU or POE treatment units may be used as part of a compliance strategy.
- The statute prohibits EPA from listing any POU treatment units to achieve compliance with an MCL or treatment technique for a microbial contaminant or an indicator of a microbial contaminant. POE is not specifically prohibited.
- The PWS must develop and obtain State approval for a monitoring plan before POE devices are installed for compliance.

Tools

Find a Certified Professional *Find a Certified Product* *Water Treatment for Dummies*

[1] Section 1412(b)(4)(E)(ii) of SDWA (40 CFR Part 141 Subpart J, Subpart K, and Subpart T

Contact us at GovAffairs@WQA.org

Other Federal Agency Actions

- EPA's Finalized Rule on Consumer Confidence Reports
- EPA Released Water System Restructuring Assessment Rule (WSRAR)
- EPA Proposed five new TSCA Chemicals
- EPA Announced Funding for Small, Underserved, and Disadvantaged Communities
- WQA Letter Sent in Support of Federal Interagency Working Group for Water

WQA's Federal Consultants

Mae Stevens
BANNER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Ted Mondloch
BANNER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Wendi Wilkes
BANNER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

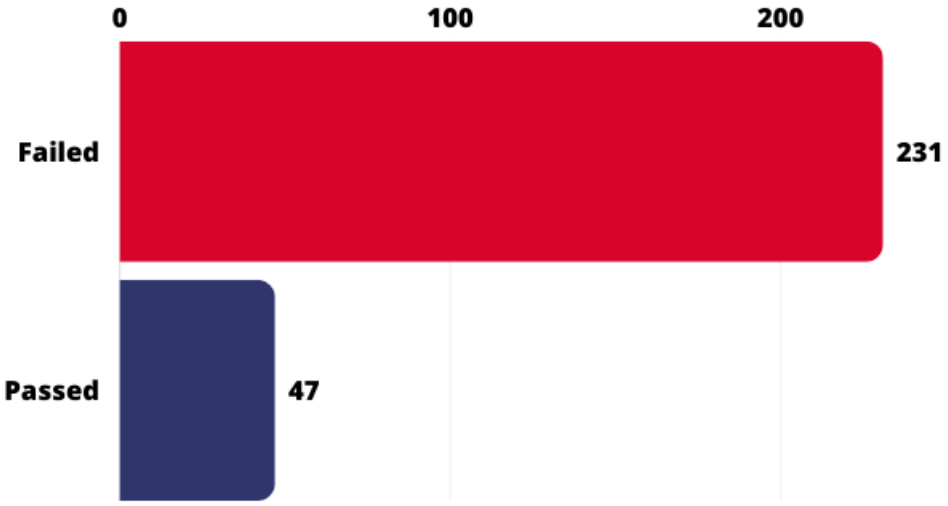
Ryan Losak
BANNER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

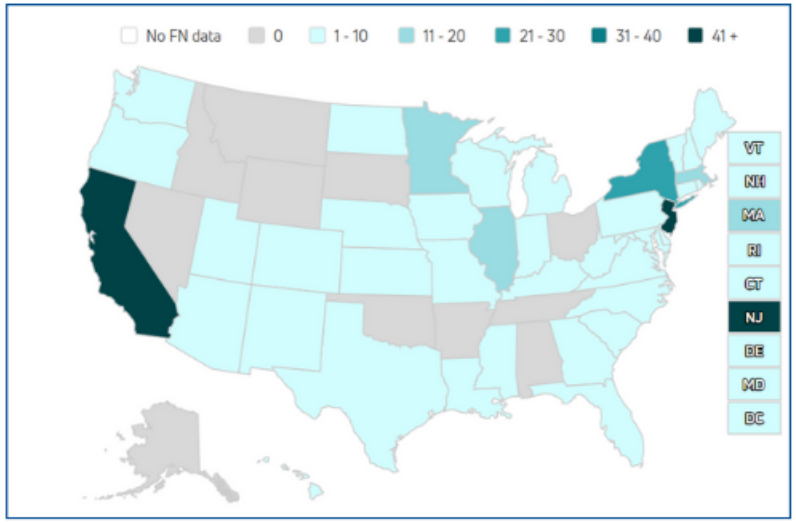
BANNER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

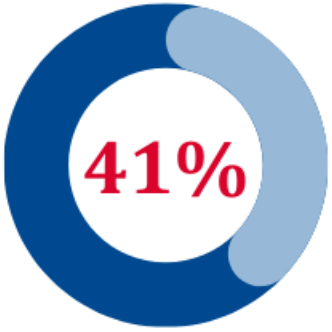
Water Quality Association

State & Local Affairs

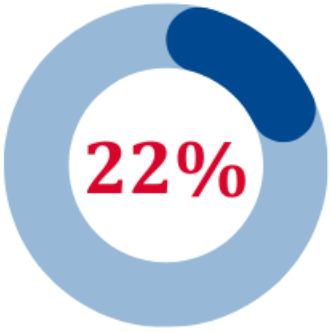
State & Local Trends



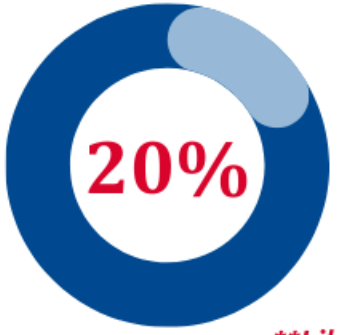




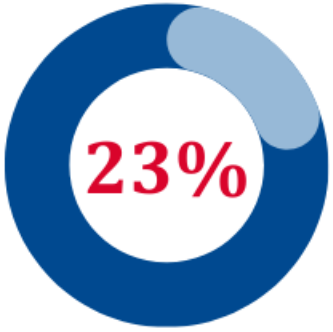
School Drinking Water Bills



Water Treatment Incentive Bills



Lead Bills



PFAS Bills

Likely higher - some overlap with "School Bills" skews this percentage lower.

Percentage of the 278 total bills tracked in 2024.

WQA Letters & Bills List

- HI SB 2579 Bottle Filling Station
- NE LB 1184 Reverse Osmosis System Tax Credit Act
- AZ SB 1132 Lead Testing in Schools
- VA HB 1295 Rural Water Supply Program and Fund
- PA HB 2011 Safe Schools Drinking Water Fund
- MA DEP Lead in Drinking Water POU Filter Guidance
- WQA Technical Amendments WA SB5997HB 2412
- Chicago Certification Acceptance Water Treatment Systems
- MI SB 694 – Protection of Children Through the Licensing and Regulation of Child Care Organizations
- CA AB 2671 – Filtered Water in Family Daycare Homes
- CA AB 1851 – Drinking water: school sites: lead testing pilot program
- NY S 7934 – PFAS Removal Treatment Installation Grant & Rebate Programs
- NY A 9260 – PFAS Removal Treatment Installation Grant & Rebate Programs
- WI SB 1078 – Providing safe drinking water in public and private schools
- PA HB 2145 – Providing for Legionnaires' disease risk management
- WQA Comments on IL PFAS Groundwater Rule

STATE BILLS LIST

FEDERAL BILLS LIST

A Day at the State Capitol

WQA Illinois Day on the Dill

★ Springfield, IL

MWQA & WQA Minnesota Day on the Hill

St. Paul, MN

★

Minnesota Water Quality ASSOCIATION

PWQA & WQA California Day on the Hill

★ Sacramento, CA

PWQA

Water Quality ASSOCIATION

A Day at the State Capitol

FWQA & WQA Florida Day on the Hill

Tallahassee, FL

TWQA & WQA Texas Advocacy

Austin, TX

Water Quality Association

WQA's California Consultant

Randy Pollack
White Brenner LLP

White Brenner LLP

2024 CALIFORNIA STATE UPDATE

In the 2024 legislative session, two significant bills aimed to enhance water safety in California's schools and daycares. Assembly Bill 1851 (Holden) proposed a pilot program led by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) to test and remediate lead in drinking water in 6-10 local educational agencies (LEAs). Assembly Bill 2671 (Weber) sought to mandate that licensed family daycare homes use water filtered through certified devices meeting safety standards, along with requirements for maintaining records on maintenance and filter replacements.

Unfortunately, both bills stalled, due to California's projected budget deficit of over $40 billion for the 2025-26 fiscal year. Despite this, the Water Quality Association (WQA) remains committed to raising awareness among legislators on the importance of enhancing water systems through point-of-use (POU) and point-of-entry (POE) technologies.

Water Quality Association

State Impact: CALIFORNIA

Chrom 6

The California State Water Resources Control Board finalized its MCL for Hexavalent Chromium (Chrom-6) at 10 ppb in Public Water Systems. California is the first state to target chromium-6. The rule specifically named RO Systems, Filtration, and Ion Exchange as the Best Available Technologies (BAT) to combat the contaminant.

PWQA
PACIFIC WATER QUALITY ASSOCIATION

SAFER Program

After the state declared clean drinking water a "basic human right", the California State Water Board distributed $880 million to improve drinking water, increase water supplies, and climate resilience projects. These projects benefitted 12 million Californians in nearly 400 communities.

A special congratulations to WQA/PWQA member Shannon Murphy on his appointment to the SAFER advisory board!

Water Quality Association

State Impact: Filter First

MICHIGAN

The Pioneers of Filter First

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) implemented Filter First, a law requiring schools and childcare centers to install NSF/ANSI certified systems to filter out lead and mandates reoccurring water testing and plans for contamination management.

Continuing Success

WQA wrote letters to the Michigan Legislature supporting the passage of MI SB694, which further supported this effort by expanding the lead testing and filtration funding in preschools.

DC & Beyond

DC to Follow the Leader

The nation's capitol has instituted a similar Filter First Program, partnering with Aquatech to provide water bottle filling stations to filter out lead with rigorous annual testing.

Like Michigan and DC, many states including WI and MN, have started looking to create similar programs.

Water Quality Association

State Impact: Licensing

WASHINGTON

Amending Existing Restrictions

Starting in 2020, Washington began requiring a plumbing license to install and maintain water treatment products, impacting long-standing local small businesses' work. WQA submitted comments on SB 5997 / HB 2412 to alleviate the burden to WA Members. Although these negotiations were unsuccessful, at the end of 2024 WQA began proactive steps to introduce legislation in the 2025 Washington Session.

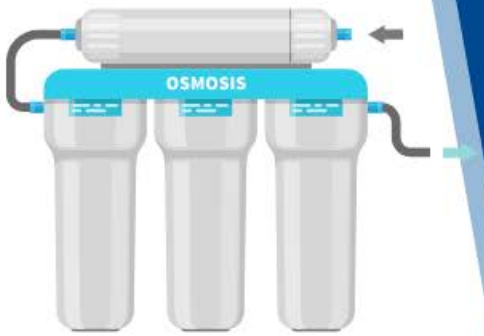
WQA PROGRAMS

WQA's Education & Training has been developed by industry professionals as optional qualifying education, with many states recognizing the program's value, including: TX, CA , OH, CO, OR, NY, WI, MD, MN, NH, MS .

WQA Training Programs

Water Quality Association

State Impact: Incentives



NEBRASKA

New Reverse Osmosis Tax Credit PASSED

WQA wrote a letter supporting the passage of LB 937, known as the Reverse Osmosis System Tax Credit Act, that establishes a one-time refundable income tax credit for the installation of a reverse osmosis system in a primary residence.

VIRGINIA

Rural Well & Small Systems Grant Fund

WQA commented on legislation that would establish a grant for small systems struggling with SDWA compliance and private well owners facing contaminates. The bill continues into the 2025 session.

Water Quality Association

State Impact: PFAS & Wells

ILLINOIS

New PFAS Regulations

Illinois Pollution Control Board (IPCB) proposed Ground Water Quality Standards for 6 PFAS substances and cobalt, selenium, and vanadium. This change impacted the 400,000 private wells and approximately 1.3 million people.

MINNESOTA

$2.8 Million in Private Well Funding

The Minnesota Legislature approved a one-time appropriation of $2.8 million for home water treatment systems for Minnesota residents whose private wells test with high levels of nitrates.

Water Quality Association

Local Impact: Water Softeners

LOCAL ENGAGEMENT

Tackling Challenges in Hometowns

Water Softeners have continued to be a local issue in 2024. WQA has worked with members in Maine, Minnesota, California, Virginia, and more to negotiate and tackle challenges to this crucial service.

Policies governing water softeners can take many different forms such as setting salt discharge restrictions, water efficiency standards, and requirements mandated by plumbing codes.

MN DLI Ruling on Softeners

Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) ruled that licensed water conditioning professionals can install water conditioning equipment in single family homes.

WATER SOFTNER WHITE PAPER

Water Quality Association

Local Impact: Lead

CHICAGO, IL

WQA met with the Mayor of Chicago to discuss the City's lead service lines, Chicago having the most of anywhere in the country. POU and POE systems are essential to aid in effort to remove lead from city drinking water.

WQA also authored letters educating regulatory officials on the many products certified to NSF/ANSI standards by WQA and others besides just NSF itself.

SYRACUSE, NY

In response to the LCRR deadline for submitting initial service line inventory in October, WQA worked closely with Syracuse, NY's congressional representatives and the EPA following the discovery of significantly high lead levels. WQA aided in sharing resources that could be leveraged by the community. This included sharing best practices on how certified water filtration products can be used to mitigate lead exposure, as well as relevant funding sources Syracuse can pursue to address their problem in the short and long-term.

The city continues to test and check lead levels in ongoing efforts to mitigate the lead issue and investigate varying lead levels in the area's drinking water.

Water Quality Association