Save Your Local Water Utilities Thousands of Dollars
Cosponsor H.R. 1340, the End Unnecessary Costs Caused by Report Mailing Act

Endorsed by the National Rural Water Association, Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies, American Water Works Association, Association of California Water Agencies, National Association of Water Companies and Florida League of Cities


Dear Colleague,

Thanks to the Mayors’ Council of Pinellas County and several of my constituents I know that cities in Pinellas County, Florida could have saved over $60,000 last year if just one federally mandated mailing requirement were eliminated. This mailing requirement applies to approximately 53,000 water systems nationwide that are annually required to mail a Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) to every household in their system. To save each of our districts thousands of dollars each year, I introduced H.R. 1340, the End Unnecessary Costs Caused by Report Mailing Act, which would end this burdensome mailing requirement.

The Safe Drinking Water Act of 1996 requires water systems to annually mail a CCR to every customer. These reports are often several pages long and contain confusing scientific data. Our constituents could be better served by a simple statement on their bill that their water is certified safe. While the exact cost of printing and mailing these reports vary depending on the number of customers in the system, it is clear that ending this requirement will save local governments money during this tough economic time. Other government agencies, including the Social Security Administration, are already working to stop the mailing of yearly reports and we should allow our local water systems to do the same.

H.R. 1340 would not stop the production of the CCR, it would simply target the costly mailing requirement. Instead of having to mail the report to every customer, water systems that tested safe for the past year could simply notify their customers of that fact on their monthly bill, while making the full CCR available on their website and by mail upon request. Water systems where the water tested unsafe would still have to mail the CCR to their customers.

At a time when local government budgets are already strained, it is unnecessary to require our local water systems to mail this report to every household when advancements in technology have provided alternative formats to distribute this information.

For more information, or to cosponsor H.R. 1340, please contact Victoria Warmouth in my office by email at Victoria.Warmouth@mail.house.gov or by phone at extension 5-5961.

Sincerely,
Bill Young
Member of Congress
Ms. Nancy Stoner  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Washington, D.C.  
Attn: Office of Water  
CCR Retrospective Review

Dear Ms. Stoner:

We are writing today to express our support for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) draft report on Consumer Confidence Report Electronic Delivery Options and Considerations. Over the past two years, consumer water agencies in our district have come to us explaining the benefits of electronic distribution of the Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). When the final guidelines are implemented, water agencies will finally have the flexibility to adopt electronic CCR distribution, with a potential annual savings of around $20 million nationally.

While all the electronic delivery options outlined in the draft report could increase consumer access to CCRs, it is particularly important that the EPA's final guidance permits community water systems to fulfill the mailing requirement by printing a direct link to an online CCR on bills, postcards, or electronic communication sent directly to customers. Every year approximately 53,000 water systems are required to produce a CCR and this method, which is consistent with legislation pending before the House and Senate, is best suited to reduce paper, printing, and postage costs associated with mailing the entire CCR.

Electronic distribution of the CCRs is crucial, but consumer water agencies know that while the majority of the people in the United States have access to computers, there will still be consumers within their distribution area that will need the full report accessible and provided to them in a traditional manner. That is why the final guidance should allow individual communities the flexibility to decide how to implement electronic CCRs communication. The ability to choose from a wide variety of options will ensure that the public's access to CCR data is not reduced whether the data is accessed online or through a hard-copy version.

It is also important to note that the EPA's adoption of these electronic communication methods will not impact existing regulatory requirements that water systems make a "good faith effort" to provide CCRs to customers who do not receive or pay water bills. Currently, state primacy agencies recommend communication methods that utilities may undertake to provide CCR information to these unbilled customers, including renters and students living in dorms. These new guidelines will not change their notification requirements; rather they will simply increase the efficiency in communicating CCRs to billed customers and benefit all members of the community by increasing public awareness and access to CCRs on utility websites.

We look forward to the finalized guidelines for electronic CCR distribution and hope that it will continue to reflect the bipartisan legislation currently before the 112th Congress.

Sincerely,