

Relief Is On The Way – Rural Water Signs Agreement for New EPA Coliform Rule

(Washington, DC) The country's largest community-based water organization - the National Rural Water Association (NRWA) signed the "Agreement in Principal" to revise the national EPA Total Coliform Drinking Water Rule. NRWA, EPA and numerous other stakeholders negotiated the historic agreement, through a Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) advisory panel, to reform the current rule for the past 18 months. The signing ceremony was held today in Washington, D.C.

Photo courtesy of <http://www.resolve.org>



NRWA FACA Representative David Baird (center) signing agreement with EPA Office of Ground Water & Drinking Water Director, Cynthia Dougherty (left) and EPA Assistant Administrator Ben Grumbles (right).

David Baird, NRWA Rep. and City Manager of Milford, Delaware said, *"We support the agreement because it improves a very complex rule for all of the country's over 150,000 small and rural communities. This proposal makes the rule more affordable in small towns and allows for enhanced public health protection by focusing our communities' public health resources on the most pressing risks. Drinking water quality is one of the most pressing public health concerns in small towns and rural America and it's the mission of all small and rural communities to provide safe and clean water to their citizens every day. Membership on this panel allowed rural water to have a voice in the process and to advocate on behalf of our member communities. We urge rapid implementation of this agreement so all communities can quickly benefit from the revisions to the rule."*

Paul Whittemore, NRWA FACA Rep. and Board of Directors Member of Granite State Rural Water Association said, *"The agreement includes a number of new revisions to the current rule. We are happy that our number one reform priority was a key provision in the agreement – to repeal the current rule's reliance on inadequate indicators to determine violations. This had resulted in many communities finding themselves in violation of the rule and having to mail letters to their consumers that lead them to believe the water was contaminated, when there was actually no public health risk. That improvement alone will be very important in all small water systems across the country."*

A copy of agreement, a summary of the agreement, and other materials are at: www.ruralwater.org.