June 20, 2012
U.S. Senators

Please SUPPORT Amendment 2247

Several unfortunate mischaracterizations of Toomey Amendment 2247 are debunked below. BOTTOM LINE: Amendment 2247 makes no changes to the content or substance of annual water quality reports. It merely allows customers to access them electronically.

MYTH: Eliminates Annual Drinking Water Right-To-Know Requirement
FACT: Amendment 2247 Eliminates NO Drinking Water Right-To-Know Requirements
· Amendment 2247 will still require community water systems to annually report water quality information to the public every year. But they will be able to do so using modern Internet communications, rather than only printed paper copies. Customers would be notified of the availability of the report through regular mailings (such as the water bill) and would have the choice of either requesting printed copies or downloading the report from the utility website.

MYTH: Eliminates Reporting Requirement When Dangerous Contaminants are in Drinking Water
FACT: Amendment 2247 Will Not Change the Contents Of Annual Water Quality Reports
· Any and all the information on “dangerous contaminants” that currently appear on printed water quality reports will continue to appear on the reports that customers may choose to access electronically.

MYTH: Eliminates Requirement that People Get Health Effects Information on Dangerous Contaminants
FACT: Amendment 2247 Will Not Change ANY Health Effects Information Contained in Consumer Confidence Reports
· The Safe Drinking Water Act requires utilities to include information in annual reports on the health effects of drinking water contaminants, to help inform people, including pregnant women, about the risks of such contaminants. The Toomey Amendment does not change this requirement in any way.

MYTH: The Safe Drinking Water Act Already Provides Reporting Flexibility
FACT: Yes, But Only To a Point, and Only for the Smallest Systems!
· The Safe Drinking Water Act currently allows some flexible CCR reporting, such as letting Governors waive mailing requirements for small drinking water systems (serving < 10,000 people). But small water systems that get a mailing waiver still must still pay to print CCRs in local newspapers, or deliver paper-copy CCRs door-to-door in their community. Amendment 2247 would simply expand these options to include delivery via the Internet.

MYTH: Source Water Protection Information is Endangered
FACT: Such Information is Indeed in Annual Reports – And It Still Will Be!
· All source water protection information required to be present in paper copy CCRs will continue to be presented in electronically offered CCRs.

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June 20, 2012

Dear Senators;

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing thousands of drinking water systems across the country, we strongly urge you to support Toomey Amendment 2247 to S. 3240, the “Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2012.”

The Toomey Amendment mirrors S. 1578, the “End Unnecessary Mailers Act,” bipartisan legislation introduced in the Senate last year. The proposal will simply allow community water systems to share their annual water quality reports with customers via the Internet. Current law dating to 1996 requires water systems to distribute thousands of hard-copy reports through the postal mail, newspaper inserts, or door-to-door deliveries.

The proposal ensures that all Americans will retain access to the important information contained in annual water quality reports. If a community water system decides to share its report on the Internet, it will have to notify all customers (via each customers’ chosen billing method) where to find the report on the water system’s public website. The water system will also be required to mail a hard-copy water quality report to any customer who requests one, for any reason.

The Toomey Amendment makes no changes to the substance of annual water quality reports, and will have no impact on the public availability of the information contained within.

Currently, many community water systems report spending tens, or even hundreds, of thousands of dollars per year to print and mail these required water quality reports. These costs are ultimately borne by local water utility ratepayers, and leave less local funding available to invest in job creating water infrastructure improvements. The Toomey Amendment will therefore allow community water systems to spend their customers’ dollars more efficiently.

Again, we strongly urge you to support Toomey Amendment 2247 to the Farm Bill.

Sincerely,

American Water Works Association
Association of California Water Agencies
Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies
National Association of Water Companies
National Rural Water Association