Oppose Toomey Amendment #2247

Eliminates Annual Drinking Water Right-To-Know Requirement
- Amendment 2247 would eliminate the Safe Drinking Water Act requirement that water providers send right-to-know reports to residents annually, and would require sending such reports only if enforceable regulatory standards are violated. (These are called “maximum contaminant level” standards.)

Eliminates Reporting Requirement When Dangerous Contaminants are in Drinking Water
- Water utilities would not be required to provide annual reports when drinking water contains dangerous contaminants for which there are no known safe levels of consumption, but a regulatory standard has not been violated.
  - These contaminants include arsenic, benzene, tetrachloroethylene, trichloroethylene, and vinyl chloride – which can cause cancer and damage the liver, kidneys, and thyroid. Children are especially vulnerable to such harmful health effects.
  - The amendment would not require water utilities to provide reports to residents when drinking water contains toxic contaminants at levels that violate Safe Drinking Water Act “treatment techniques.” (The amendment requires reports only with violations of “maximum contaminant levels.”)
  - These contaminants include lead, viruses, cryptosporidium, and radioactive substances that can cause cancer, damage to the brain and nervous system, and life-threatening gastrointestinal illnesses. Children are especially vulnerable to such harmful health effects.

Eliminates Requirement that People Get Health Effects Information on Dangerous Contaminants
- 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.

Safe Drinking Water Act Already Provides Reporting Flexibility
- The Safe Drinking Water Act already has flexible reporting provisions, including that Governors can waive mailing requirements for small drinking water systems (having < 10,000 people).

Source Water Protection Information Also Included in Annual Reports
- The Safe Drinking Water Act also provides people with important source water protection information to enhance pollution prevention efforts for drinking water sources.
June 20, 2012

Oppose Senator Toomey’s Amendment (#2247) to the Farm Bill that Eliminates Right-to-Know Protections for Our Drinking Water

Dear Senator:

On behalf of American Rivers' more than 100,000 members and supporters across the country, I urge you to oppose Senator Toomey’s amendment (SA 2247) to the Farm Bill (S. 3240). This amendment rolls back critical protections under the Safe Drinking Water Act, one of the fundamental laws that safeguard the quality and safety of our drinking water.

Senator Toomey's amendment would eliminate annual right-to-know reports sent by water utilities to residents, as currently required under the Safe Drinking Water Act. These reports help to ensure transparency and accountability. Under this amendment, reports would only be sent to residents if there is a violation. This means that citizens would not be informed when toxic contaminants like arsenic, benzene, and trichloroethylene - which have no known safe levels for consumption - are present in the water, yet are at levels below the regulatory standard.

The Safe Drinking Water Act already includes flexibility for small communities to waive right-to-know requirements. Removing this critical protection for clean and safe drinking water puts people and children in particular at risk of harm from drinking water contamination.

I urge you to stand strong for clean water protections that safeguard public health for our communities. Oppose Senator Toomey’s amendment (SA 2247) to the Farm Bill and protect people's right to know about the quality of their drinking water.

Sincerely,

Jim Bradley
Senior Director, Government Relations
American Rivers