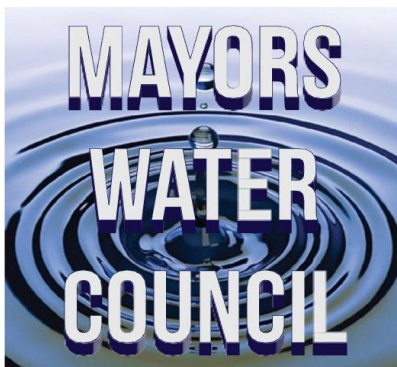


Mayors Water Council

SPRING ISSUE 2024

INSIDE

- Pages 1-2: Mayors Water Council Convenes in Washington D.C.
- Page 3: On Tap at EPA The Latest on Lead and PFAS
- Page 4: United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals
- Pages 5-6: Mayors Spotlight: *Water in my Community*
- Page 7: New Report Water Main Break Rates in the US and Canada
- Page 8: From the Field -Water Sector Updates



Mayors Meet in Washington




Pictured: Mayor Deborah Robertson, Mayor Christina Muryn

The Mayors Water Council (MWC) convened in Washington D.C. during USCM's 92nd Winter Meeting on January 17th, 2024. Led by MWC Chair Mayor Deborah Robertson of Rialto, CA, a host of Mayors, business leaders, and EPA's municipal ombudsmen gathered to discuss pressing water issues.

Of critical priority are several new regulations moving forward at EPA that will impact local governments, most notably centered around lead pipe removal and PFAS contamination.

Mayors assembled with subject-matter experts including **Steve Via** (*American Water Works Association*), **Alan Roberson** (*Association of State Drinking Water Administrators*), and **Jamie Piziali** (*U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*).

Via and Roberson provided critical updates on EPA's new lead and copper rule improvements, including a discussion surrounding anticipated municipal implementation challenges, estimated costs, and how best cities can prepare for compliance. Piziali updated Mayors on the Agency's upcoming regulatory agenda for 2024. 



January Mayors Water Council Meeting

Water & Health Advisory Council Member and Corona Environmental President **Chad Seidel** provided an updated on newly released PFAS monitoring data from the EPA. According to Seidel, analyzation of the data monitoring reveals potential flaws with EPA's estimated costs and benefits.

David Choate of American Water briefed Mayors on EPA's drinking water regulation for PFAS, reviewing the timeline of the proposed rule, overview of treatment options, and estimated costs for compliance (*more on page 8*).

From Veolia, **Kendra Morris** announced the company's deployment of "**Hubgrade.**" which leverages digital solutions to enhance the efficiency, data collection and system monitoring of water operations (*more on page 8*).



Pictured: Mayor Mury, David Choate, and Chad Seidel

Materials and presentations from this meeting can be found online [here](#).

The next Mayors Water Council Meeting will be held at **The United States Conference of Mayors 92nd Annual Meeting this June in Kansas City, MO**. More information about the meeting can be found [here](#).



Pictured: Jamie Piziali, Steve Via, and Kendra Morris



On Tap at EPA

The latest on new regulations to replace all lead pipes and the Agency's next steps in finalizing stringent new PFAS standards for drinking water

Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI)

EPA is proposing to amend the current regulations for lead in public drinking water. Key components of the proposal include: requires the vast majority of water systems to replace lead services lines within 10 years requires water systems to provide an initial inventory of their lead service lines by October 16, 2024; and lowers the lead action level from 15 parts per billion (ppb) to 10 ppb. USCM supports EPA's efforts to accomplish this goal, but has some concerns regarding affordability and implementation of the proposal. EPA's estimates the annual cost to comply with the rule will cost public water systems between \$2.1 billion and \$3.6 billion. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) did include \$15 billion in grant/loan aid to the states. However, this figure is well below the projected replacement cost of \$90 to \$100 billion and the majority of the \$15 billion comes in the form of loans, which local governments must pay back. In addition to financial concerns, local governments face a number of practical limitations impacting implementation, including but not limited to: the number of lead pipes in a community, local market conditions, workforce availability, liability concerns, and gaining access to private property.

The Conference, along with NLC and NACo, have submitted comments to EPA outlining these concerns, recommending that the final rule include additional direct funding to local governments, expanded compliance schedules and provide maximum implementation flexibility. The rule is expected to be finalized by October, 2024.

A copy of the USCM/NLC/NACo comments can be found [here](#).

PFAS Drinking Water Standards

The Agency has proposed a new rule setting new limits in drinking water with PFOS and PFOA (two different types of PFAS) proposed at 4 parts per trillion, the lowest possible detection limit for these chemicals that can be reliably measured. In proposing this new regulation, EPA conducted a cost-benefit analysis and concluded annual costs of \$770 million. However, the American Water Works Association (AWWA) has estimated annual costs between \$3.9 - \$5.2 billion. Water systems will be required to test, monitor, and treat for PFAS. Mayors have raised concerns that not only will local governments be unable to afford the required costs to comply with this regulation, but also that the Agency has underestimated the cascading impacts this regulation will have on local communities, primarily in the form of higher water bills. The Conference, joined by the National League of Cities and the National Association of Counties, has submitted comments to the Agency in May 2023. The new drinking water proposed standards plan to be finalized in early 2024.

A copy of the USCM/NLC/NACo comment letter can be found [here](#). Additionally, an editorial piece on EPA's PFAS rules by Mayors Muryn (*Findlay, OH*), Robertson (*Rialto, CA*), Rickenmann (*Columbia, SC*), and Williams (*Huntington, WV*) can be found [here](#).

New Guidance for Permitting of Combined Sewer Systems (CSS)

EPA proposed a new Guidance outlining approaches for combined sewer overflow (CSO) communities nearing completion of the projects and activities identified in their Long-Term Control Plans (LTCP). The Conference supports the Agency's efforts to clarify future regulatory compliance actions for these communities, however, some of the provisions EPA specified in the Guidance could actually hinder the ability of local governments to improve water quality and protect public health. EPA Guidance for CSO communities should be clear, consistent, and adhere to existing CSO Policy and statutory authority.

The Conference submitted joint comments with the National League of Cities to EPA on March 21, 2024 outlining our concerns. We urge the Agency to address these concerns by modifying the proposed Guidance. The Conference plans to join other groups in engaging in discussion with EPA to provide meaningful input.

You can view our letter [here](#). EPA's Guidance can be found [here](#).

United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals

By: Caroline Kleinfox, Director of U.S. SDG Policy Planning at the UN Foundation

Working towards a more just, sustainable, and prosperous future for all Americans requires new ways of thinking, working together, and identifying shared priorities. Communities across the country, from Philadelphia to Sacramento, Minneapolis to San Antonio, Flint to Orlando, and more, are using the SDGs to inform sustainability plans and connect with domestic and international peers around solutions and transparency that benefit their constituents. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer a common language for action through a set of 17 interconnected objectives, ranging from ending poverty and hunger; to strong institutions, infrastructure, and jobs for all; and to a clean energy future. Read more in [this blog post](#) by Caroline Kleinfox, Director of U.S. SDG Policy Planning at the UN Foundation, [click here](#) for more U.S. examples, and learn about how cities globally are reporting on the SDGs [here](#).

Editor's Note: The United States Conference of Mayors has supported mayors in their efforts to develop and implement sustainable development goals and practices since 2012 when the Conference voted to support the UN's Rio+20 convening, and adopted policy to focus efforts on creating a green economy in the context of sustainable development poverty eradication; and organizing an institutional framework for promoting sustainable development that includes a broad range of stakeholders. Mayors have a role in promoting sustainable development in their cities, and one of the best ways to achieve them is through sharing best practices and developing measurable metrics reflecting the progress toward sustainability. The UN Foundation is coordinating international activities that include the United States.

Mayors Spotlight: Water in my Community

Mayor Kim Norton, City of Rochester, MN



Kim Norton is in her second term as mayor of Rochester, Minnesota, the state's third-largest city and home to its largest private employer, the renowned Mayo Clinic. Rochester, with a population of 122,000, is expected to grow by 50% in the next 20 years, tracking with increases in public investment and private development, including a \$5 billion plan by Mayo Clinic to reimagine its Rochester campus over the next seven years. This enviable growth also poses challenges that can overburden infrastructure and accelerate urban sprawl at a time when the City of Rochester has committed to reducing air and water pollution.

Through Mayor Norton's leadership, Rochester is leading by example in environmental stewardship, fiscal responsibility and sustainability, social equity, public safety, and compassion. The City of Rochester is taking a multi-faceted approach to achieve its strategic priorities with an aggressive capital plan to expand infrastructure capacity, increase public and active transportation, and promote infill. Mayor Norton and City teammates are active in state and federal efforts to develop strategies to address per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in a fiscally responsible and scientifically sound manner. Mayor Norton has attended and testified at multiple committee hearings.

Several recent studies show that removing and destroying PFAS from drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater systems is not feasible. Therefore, the City is leading an effort with other Minnesota Cities to measure PFAS coming from everyday domestic activities and prioritize the reduction of their use. This approach protects human health first and foremost while it reduces the amount of PFAS entering our water resources. The City is also implementing several greenhouse gas reduction efforts. A recent Community Resiliency Study identified the populations and assets most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and the City is developing a strategy to implement adaptation and resiliency measures.

Mayor Norton proudly works with the Water Council and joins mayors from around the country in wrestling with these and other issues as we work together to achieve our environmental stewardship and social justice goals in a fiscally responsible and sustainable manner for our residents and visitors.

Mayors Spotlight: Water in my Community

Mayor Deborah Robertson, City of Rialto, CA Mayors Water Council, Chair



Mayor Deborah Robertson of Rialto, CA, has emerged as a visionary leader since her election in November 2012, consistently earning the trust of constituents with her unique governance style. Recently, Mayor Robertson spearheaded an agreement to sell surplus recycled water to the Inland Empire Utilities Agency (IEUA), advancing public-private partnerships, environmental sustainability, and stewardship.

Under her direction, Rialto's wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) processes 6.2 million gallons per day (MGD) of recycled water, expected to reach a capacity of 11.7 MGD due to city growth. Mayor Robertson led the city during negotiations with IEUA to optimize water utilization, benefiting the region while preserving native endangered species and enhancing downstream ecosystems.

Highlighting the agreement's benefits, Mayor Robertson underscores Rialto's commitment to economic health, diversity, and environmental stewardship. This partnership not only enhances water quality but also supports regional economic vitality and water reliability through initiatives like the Chino Basin Program, aligning with IEUA's plans for an Advanced Water Purification Facility and groundwater injection facilities.

Mayor Robertson's proactive governance positions Rialto as a municipal innovation leader, recognized as the e3p3 Model City for its exemplary programs addressing Environmental Sustainability, Economic Development, and Equity through fostering collaborations between public and private sectors, solidifying Rialto's role as an environmental steward.

Mayor Robertson's full bio can be viewed [here](#).

Mayors Water Council

A Task Force of The U.S. Conference of Mayors

The Mayors Water Council (MWC) provides a forum for discussions of issues impacting how cities provide safe, adequate and affordable water and wastewater services and infrastructure in America's Principal Cities in the 21st Century. It is open to all Mayors, and functions as a USCM Task Force. The MWC focuses on water resources issues, including: watershed management; water supply planning; water infrastructure financing; rehabilitation of surface and sub-surface water infrastructure; water conservation; wetlands construction and education programs; water system program management and asset management. The MWC will continue to develop nonpartisan local government positions on Federal legislation, regulations and policy. The MWC acts through the USCM Environment Committee, and other Committees as appropriate, to propose and adopt resolutions on water related matters that benefits the nation's cities.

Utah State University Releases Updated and Expanded Pipe Performance Survey: 20% of Pipes Need Replacement at a \$452 Billion Cost

The Mayors Water Council alerted mayors about a 2018 Utah State University (USU) survey of 300 water systems to begin to consistently measure pipe breaks, leakage, replacement, and management. Professor Steven L. Barfuss, P.E., Research Professor at USU in the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department, and Associate Director at the Utah Water Research Laboratory (UWRL), a world-renowned water research facility, is lead investigator of USU's 2023 main break study. The sample size for this effort is almost three times larger than the previous 2018 USU water main break survey, with 802 utility systems participating and nearly 400,000 miles of pipe. In terms of pipe mileage, this is the largest study in the US and Canada of its kind. Survey results reported in 2023 provide updated measures of breakage and leakage. Failure rates for water mains were examined over 12-month and five-year periods and compared to more than a decade of data from previous USU studies.

Professor Barfuss analyzed the results of the survey and suggests estimates of national pipe performance trends. For example, 90% of water mains are comprised of a mixture of four main pipe materials: PVC, ductile iron, cast iron and asbestos cement. There are an estimated 260,000 pipe failures annually, or some 11.1 breaks per mile. Overall break rates are declining, according to the survey report. A subset of survey respondents (530 systems) indicated average water loss leakage of 11%, up from 10% in 2018; and, that using asset management influences leakage rates.

The 2023 survey report includes a greater number of small utilities – 75%, compared to the 68% in 2018. A small utility is defined, for the purposes of the survey, as a system with 500 pipe miles or less. The information on small systems is important because they comprise a majority of systems in North America. Small system subsurface capital investment needs are often neglected.

“The results of this study certainly give us a better understanding of the current state of buried infrastructure in the U.S. and Canada. Additionally, information on current funding needs will aid local leaders as they move forward in upgrading aging water infrastructure and replacement planning efforts.”

– Professor Steven L. Barfuss, P.E.

To access the full 2023 Survey and the analytical appendices please [click here](#).

For any questions, please reach out to Professor Barfuss at steve.barfuss@usu.edu



Water's Digital Future

By: Veolia North America

Managing water treatment can be challenging for many different industries. Operating costs, maintenance and compliance must be controlled to ensure an efficient and low risk plant. This is particularly important at a time when local leaders are finding new avenues to address critical infrastructure needs. **Hubgrade**, Veolia's new digital platform tool, provides a suite of digitally enabled solutions including data collection, system monitoring, and predictive systems for water, waste, energy and other environmental resources. By combining real-time data, advanced analytics, and human expertise, water optimization needs of local governments can be addressed to improve facility operational processes by: enhancing security/safety on site, reducing costs, increasing performance efficiencies, ensuring stability of operations, and more.

Learn more here: [Introducing Hubgrade: Smart Digital Solutions](#)

To date, Veolia has deployed Hubgrade centers in North America, nine European countries, as well as the United Arab Emirates and Australia.

PFAS and Drinking Water

By: American Water

Last March, the [United States Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) proposed to regulate 6 specific PFAS compounds in drinking water. EPA's proposed rule set an MCL at 4 ppt for both PFOA and PFOS, significantly lower than any previously enacted state-level PFAS regulations. For reference, 4 ppt equates to adding 40 drops, or less than ½ teaspoon, into a Rose Bowl full of water.

The EPA estimated a total annualized national compliance cost of approximately \$0.8 - \$1.2 billion for their proposed rule. The [American Water Works Association \(AWWA\)](#) commissioned a separate study to look at the cost of compliance and concluded that the annualized cost is between \$3.9 and \$5.2 billion; or roughly 4-5 times higher than EPA's estimates. Based on internal estimates to install, operate, and maintain treatment across the company's utility footprint, American Water believes that the AWWA's higher estimates are much more accurate than EPA's. Therefore, we expect the \$10 billion in federal funding for PFAS treatment, allocated through the IIJA, will fall significantly short of the overall cost to install and operate the needed PFAS treatment systems across the U.S.

We support EPA's efforts to protect public health by proposing national drinking water standards for PFAS and American Water has joined other water organizations urging the EPA, Congress, and other decision-makers to implement policies that will **(1)** keep harmful PFAS out of our drinking water supplies and our communities; **(2)** exempt all water and wastewater systems from financial liability for PFAS under CERCLA; **(3)** ensure all water and wastewater utility providers, regardless of ownership, have equal access to all Federal and/or state funding related to treating PFAS; and **(4)** establish a permanent federally funded water and wastewater low-income customer assistance program.

Learn more here: <https://www.amwater.com/corp/Water-Quality-Wastewater-Service/pfas>



Mayors Water Council January 2024 Mayoral Membership



Chair

Deborah Robertson, Mayor of Rialto, CA

Steven L. Reed
Mayor of Montgomery, AL

John. P Marchand
Mayor of Livermore, CA

Deborah Robertson
Mayor of Rialto, CA

Joe Ganim
Mayor of Bridgeport, CT

Joy Cooper
Mayor of Hallandale Beach, FL

Frank Ortis
Mayor of Pembroke Pines, FL

Rochelle Robinson
Mayor of Douglasville, GA

Kevin C. Richardson
Mayor of Lake Barrington, IL

John D. Noak
Mayor of Romeoville, IL

Mark W. Myers
Mayor of Greenwood, IN

LaToya Cantrell
Mayor of New Orleans, LA

Leirion Gaylor Baird
Mayor of Lincoln, NE

J. Christian Bollwage
Mayor of Elizabeth, NJ

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Mayor of Gloucester, NJ

Timothy C. McDonough
Mayor of Hope, NJ

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Jack W. Bradley
Mayor of Lorain, OH

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Mayor of Youngstown, OH

Glenn Lewis
Mayor of Moore, OK

Steve Callaway
Mayor of Hillsboro, OR

Danene Sorace
Mayor of Lancaster, PA

Mary Lou Pauly
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Ryan Sorenson
Mayor of Sheboygan, WI

Shawn N. Reilly
Mayor of Waukesha, WI



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