



June 23, 2017

The Honorable John Shimkus
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington DC 20515-6115

Dear Representative Shimkus,

Thank for you for the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee on Environment to testify at the hearing on the “Drinking Water System Improvement Act and Related Issues of Funding, Management, and Compliance Assistance under the Safe Drinking Water Act.”

In response to the questions from the Honorable Debbie Dingell:

1. Ms. Thorp, do you think the Safe Drinking Water Act should be amended to strengthen notification requirements and increase transparency?
2. Ms. Thorp, does the draft bill under discussion today include any provisions that would improve or strengthen public notification requirements?

There are a number of ways that Safe Drinking Water Act implementation could be improved to increase transparency and to improve both the Public Notification requirements that pertain to all National Primary Drinking Water Regulations and the specific public education and notification requirements in the Lead and Copper Rule. For example, general public notification materials and requirements could be updated to reflect changes in use of traditional and social media and social science research on how people understand public health risk. In the case of lead, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified transparency as a key element of its November 2016 “Drinking Water Act Plan,” and has asked states to work with water systems to improve access from everything from monitoring data to the location of lead service lines.

While many improvements to implementation can be done through revisions to regulations and guidance, updates to the underlying statute can help to reinforce the importance of these activities. There are relevant provisions in H.R. 1068, the Safe Drinking Water Act amendments of 2017, introduced earlier this year.

The bill under discussion at the May 19 hearing, referenced above, did not include provisions related to public notification or transparency to my knowledge.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify and please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Lynn Thorp
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