



May 16, 2019

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
506 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rob Portman
448 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Shaheen and Senator Portman:

On behalf of the undersigned water sector organizations, we would like to thank you for introducing S. 1251, the Safe Drinking Water Assistance Act. This important legislation will improve critical research into the potential human health impacts of unregulated emerging contaminants that may be found in drinking water supplies. We are pleased to offer our support.

As you know, the Safe Drinking Water Act includes a robust, science-based regulatory process that EPA must follow when determining whether to propose a national primary drinking water regulation for a currently-unregulated contaminant. As part of this process, the law requires EPA to regularly identify emerging contaminants – those not currently subject to federal regulation – and make determinations of whether they should be subject to new limits. However, a lack of scientific data that explains the human health effects of certain emerging contaminants often slows EPA’s ability to make regulatory determinations in a timely manner, and leaves communities uncertain as to the precise human health impacts of emerging contaminants that may have been detected in their water supplies.

The Safe Drinking Water Assistance Act would improve research into the human health implications of emerging contaminants by establishing an interagency working group between EPA and the Department of Health and Human Services that will organize and coordinate federal activities to identify the human health effects of emerging contaminants. The bill would also establish a National Emerging Contaminant Research Initiative to improve the identification, monitoring, and treatment of emerging contaminants. Finally, the proposal would offer technical assistance to help states respond when emerging contaminants have been detected in water supplies relied upon by their residents.

We support the Safe Drinking Water Assistance Act because it would facilitate research into the human health effects of emerging contaminants – thus giving critical data to communities where contaminants are present, and to EPA as it undertakes the process of deciding whether a national primary drinking water regulation is warranted for a given contaminant. We appreciate your leadership on this issue, and we look forward to working with you as this legislation advances through the Senate.

Sincerely,

American Public Works Association
American Water Works Association
Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies
National Association of Water Companies
National Groundwater Association

Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP), Inc.
Water Environment Federation
The Water Research Foundation
Water Quality Association
WaterReuse Association