

It's Time to End the Mailing Requirement for the Consumer Confidence Report



Water systems, depending on size, are required to post and in most cases, mail to each customer a copy of their annual water quality report, otherwise known as the “Consumer Confidence Report”. The report contains information regarding the water supply, the testing results for organic and inorganic quality, and details of any deficiencies in the last year. The requirement to prepare the report and mail it is an EPA mandate. It’s past-time to end the requirement to provide this report by mail.

While the Consumer Confidence Report sounds like a great idea, water systems are already required to provide separate notice of any deficiency, and generally that notice is required within a timeframe that doesn’t coincide with the preparation of the annual water quality report. While mailing the water quality report may be a great idea in concept, most people do not care and do not read the reports. Water systems receive few follow up requests for information. The report often adds to confusion by people who may be concerned that their water might not be safe when in fact the purpose of the report is to demonstrate that it is safe.

Two bills have been introduced in Congress to end the mailing requirement. The first is HR 1340 introduced by Representative Young from Florida. As of September 25, the bill has 18 co-sponsors. KRWA has asked the four House Members from Kansas to consider co-signing. As of September 25, three Members stated that they would review it.

In the Senate, Senator Toomey from Pennsylvania has introduced a companion bill. It is S. 1578. KRWA appreciates that Senator Moran was an original co-sponsor of S. 1578. Senator Pat Roberts has signed as a co-sponsor. KRWA members appreciate that support.

Both of these bills would still require that each system prepare the annual water quality report. If the system had no violations in the prior year, then the mailing requirement would be waived. If the system had any violations, then the mailing requirement would be continued. It was KRWA’s suggestion that the mailing requirement be scrapped entirely because notices of any violation have likely already been provided by mail.

Regardless, either bill is a step forward. Both bills allow the local water system to post the report on their Web site. Given that the vast majority of water systems do not have their own Web site, KRWA hopes that alternative sites could be used for posting of CCRs. It’s a service that KRWA, or other organizations who want to help water systems, might be able to provide. KRWA doesn’t have an exclusive to format and copy CCRs! At the requests of systems, KRWA prepared 280 Water Quality Reports for 168 cities and 112 for RWDs in 2011. KRWA also ran 119,677 copies for those systems. It’s a service that saves money for systems and KRWA will continue to offer it.

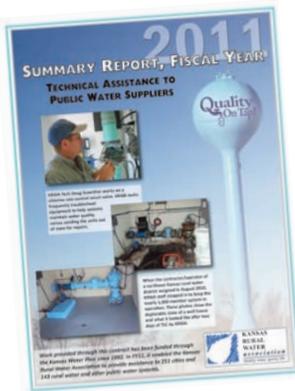
What’s the mailing cost?

There are nearly one million CCRs mailed in Kansas annually. Because most of the smaller systems do not have the quantity of mailing needed to justify bulk mailing, many CCRs are sent at first class rates. The Kansas Rural Water Association and public water systems agree that anyone wanting information about the water quality in their system should have that information provided to them by their water system. But there are more economical ways of making the report available than by sending it via regular mail. While EPA expects state organizations and agencies to provide reports and to communicate with these agencies

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KRWA encourages water systems to contact House members (Reps. Pompeo, Huelskamp, Yoder, Jenkins) to also ask them to co-sign HR 1340. KRWA has made that request. Systems need to communicate their interests to their legislators. KRWA encourages water systems to contact them via email or call their offices so that they understand the concerns that public water systems have on this topic. To access individual members' Web sites, and to contact them, go to www.house.gov/representatives/.



Report summarizes a year of work by KRWA under Kansas Water Plan funding

The Kansas Rural Water Association is able to provide services to water systems because of partnerships with state and federal agencies. One contract that KRWA has operated since FY 1992 has been funded through the

Kansas Water Plan with some supplemental funding during a few years by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. KRWA recently provided a summary report

of the work by KRWA staff to members of the Kansas Water Authority and all Basin Advisory Committee Members.

So what did the expenditure of \$300,000 of State Water Plan funds achieve for public water systems in FY11?

- ◆ 251 cities and 143 rural water systems, public wholesale districts or other types of public water systems received help of some sort, ranging from water loss to emergency chlorinator or control system repair
- ◆ 129 water loss surveys were conducted, locating more than 338 million gallons of loss on an annual basis. The cost of this production or purchase of water on an annual basis would be more than \$863,000.
- ◆ KRWA worked with 54 "Special Focus" projects identified by the Kansas Water Office as having unaccounted for water loss of 30 percent or more based on 2009 Annual Water Use Reports.

The entire report is available on the KRWA Web site at www.krwa.net/specialfocus/fy11.shtml (or at www.krwa.net and then under "Technical Assistance" and then "Focus On Water Loss"). The online report is searchable by system and basin.

Elmer Ronnebaum is KRWA General Manager; he has been employed by KRWA since 1983. He served seven years on the KRWA board of directors prior to that. He also helped develop a large RWD and served for fourteen years on a water district board of directors.





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