

# 2016 USEPA Outlook



**O**n September 30, 2015, Dr. Peter Grevatt, Director of USEPA's Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water, addressed the attendees of the National Rural Water Association's WaterPro Conference in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Dr. Grevatt provided the latest information on drinking water regulations and initiatives. According to Dr. Grevatt, a lot will happen with regulations in 2016. I believe that readers of The Kansas Lifeline might be interested in the comments.

## Revised Total Coliform Rule (RTCR)

The compliance deadline for the RTCR is April 1, 2016. Dr. Grevatt stated that it is a big rule, it's an important rule, and hopefully it will offer some flexibility for systems. In preparation of the RTCR, EPA recently released fact sheets for systems that serve a population of less than 1,000 on the topics of monthly monitoring, repeat monitoring, Level 1 and Level 2 Assessments, and Seasonal System Requirements. The fact sheets aim to speak plainly about the RTCR, which can be a complicated regulation. EPA is also working on a transition memo for the transition from the current TCR to the RTCR; specifically on the topics of Consumer Confidence Reports (CCR) and Public Notice (PN). The RTCR will change required health effects language.

## CCR iWriter

Dr. Grevatt acknowledged the importance of the recent change to allow electronic reporting of the CCR. He also talked about the EPA iWriter which is an online tool designed to help systems meet the CCR requirements. The iWriter was recently updated to meet security requirements and the new health effects language of the RTCR.

## Lead and Copper Rule (LCR)

Dr. Grevatt stated that the LCR is probably the most complicated rule to implement. EPA is currently in the process of making long-term revisions to the LCR. The National Drinking Water Advisory Council has a work group looking at ways to make the rule easier to implement and maintain public health protection; specifically, sampling protocol and lead service lines (LSLs). There's an estimated ten million LSLs currently in use in the US. Recently congress passed the Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act, which reduced the acceptable level of lead in fixtures, fittings, pipes, and solder from 8 percent down to .25 percent. Dr. Grevatt commented that it doesn't

make sense for a homeowner's fixture to have .25 percent lead, yet the water coming out of that fixture traveled through 50 feet of pure lead pipe to get there. So the work group is looking at the issue of LSL replacement and the challenges that will go along with it – the cost of LSL replacement and the legal issues involved with property lines. Most water systems have control of a water line from the main to the property line and the homeowner has control of the line from the property line to the



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house. EPA discovered that systems that attempted a partial LSL replacement made the problem worse by cutting the pipe and releasing lead particles into the water. The revisions to the LCR will steer utilities away from partial LSL replacement. Corrosion control will continue to be an important component of the LCR. EPA hopes to find a way to make revisions to the LCR that will make it easier for water systems, but also protect public health. The work group is expected to provide recommendations to EPA for LCR revisions in 2016.

## Contaminant Candidate List (CCL) 4

The CCL is a list of contaminants that may be appropriate for regulation in the future. The draft list was published in February 2015 for public comment. The list includes all contaminants from the CCL 3 list and two additional contaminants which were added by public nomination. EPA is currently reviewing public comments and waiting on a report from the Science Advisory Board. The final CCL 4 will be published in 2016.

## Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR)

The UCMR requires water systems (all large and a sub-set of small systems) to sample to determine the occurrence of substances of interest in drinking water. There are 30 substances on the UCMR list. One of the compounds on the UCMR 3 list is Strontium. Strontium occurs mostly in ground water. In EPA's recent Proposed Regulatory Determination process (when EPA determines whether or not to pursue writing a regulation), Strontium was the only substance to receive a preliminary positive. EPA is currently looking at public comments and they will be making a decision on whether or not to regulate Strontium in 2016. Dr. Grevatt stated that EPA will make sure the determination is based on sound science.

The proposed UCMR 4 list will be published in 2016 and a public webinar will be held following the proposal. Some of the contaminants that Dr. Grevatt expects to be included in the proposal will be cyanotoxins (from algal blooms).

## Six Year Review

The Safe Drinking Water Act requires the EPA to review existing drinking water regulations to see if changes need to be made to increase public health protection. In 2016, EPA will be reviewing the following contaminants/rules: Fluoride, Long Term 2 Enhanced

Surface Water Treatment Rule, and Microbial Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rules (including Chlorate and Nitrosamines). EPA will publish the findings of the six year review in 2016.

## Perchlorate

EPA decided to develop a regulation for perchlorate several years ago. According to Dr. Grevatt, EPA is in the process of evaluating the science. The Science Advisory Board advised the EPA to obtain more data on the toxicity of perchlorate. EPA has been working with the Food and Drug Administration on a modeling effort. There will be a peer review of the model in 2016 which will be a public meeting.

## Public Notification

Dr. Grevatt stated that he had heard concerns about some of the language that is required to be used in public notices. For example, the message for a disinfection byproduct violation talks about "cancer" and the message for a nitrate violation includes the phrase "babies may die". Dr. Grevatt received comments that this form of communication frightens the public, not only at the time the problem is occurring, but even perhaps for months or years after the issue has been

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## Annual conference is for you!

The 2016 Annual Conference & Exhibition sponsored by the Kansas Rural Water Association is set for March 29 - 31 at the Century II Convention Center in Wichita. I hope that readers and others will plan to attend. Here are some of the concurrent sessions that deal with regulatory and water supply issues:

- The Revised Total Coliform Rule; Online Portal
- Rationalization of Goals for Water Vision Implementation
- Phosphates in Water Treatment Process
- Nutrient Monitoring and Wastewater Permits
- Diminishing Water Resources: A Geologist's Perspective
- Chlorine Safety – Information Operators Need to Know
- Backflow or Back-Siphonage – Staying Protected
- Water Wellfield Management and Well Construction
- Water Rights Perfection – The Permit to Certificate Process



resolved. He stated that EPA needs to evaluate effective risk communication and the desired intent of public notification.

## Pharmaceuticals

Dr. Grevatt received a question regarding the topic of potential regulation of pharmaceuticals in drinking water in the near future. He stated that there are no pharmaceuticals or personal care products listed on the CCL or UCMR.

## Non-Regulatory

- EPA recently developed a Flood Resilience Guide and a Drought Response and Recovery Guide which provides tools to help systems prepare for floods and drought.
- EPA is also working on Legionella guidance for large buildings with premise plumbing issues (hospitals, casinos, hotels, etc.)

If you would like to watch Dr. Grevatt's address, the video is available at: <https://youtu.be/Umhg2NJT4Y>

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