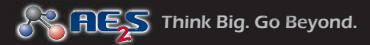


The Update

April 2010



Drinking Water Strategy

The US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) is developing a new set of strategies to address the growing number of waterborne contaminants in drinking water.

A recent speech by USEPA Administrator, Lisa Jackson, cited four principles that the USEPA will focus on as part of the new strategies. They included:

- Address contaminants as groups rather than one at a time to be more cost-effective.
- Foster development of new drinking water technologies to address health risks posed by a broad array of contaminants.
- Use the authority of multiple statutes to help protect drinking water.
- Partner with states to share more complete data from monitoring public water systems.

By carrying out these actions, the USEPA aspires to provide more robust public health protection in an open and transparent manner, assist small communities in identifying cost and energy efficient treatment technologies, and build consumer confidence by providing more efficient sustainable treatment technologies to deliver safe water at a reasonable cost.

For more information on this topic, please visit <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/sdwa/dwstrategy.html> or contact AE2S. ■

2010 AWWA Fly-In

The American Water Works Association (AWWA) held its ninth annual Water Matters! Fly-In March 24-25. Two key issues highlighted during the Fly-In included Water Infrastructure Needs and Chemical Security Legislation.

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Every six years the Safe Drinking Water Act requires the USEPA to review National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (NPDWRs) to identify the NPDWRs for which changes in technology, assessments on health effects, or other factors support a revision for public health protection. The USEPA has identified four primary regulated contaminants as candidates for revision under

Drinking Water Contaminants to be Revised

the USEPA's Six-Year Review 2. The four contaminants include acrylamide, epichlorohydrin, tetrachloroethylene, and trichloroethylene. The remaining sixty-seven contaminants on the NPDWR list have been determined to not be appropriate for review at this time.

Acrylamide is used to synthesize polyacrylamides, which are used to coagulate solids in a liquid and are commonly utilized in water and wastewater treatment. Acrylamide also naturally occurs in many cooked starchy foods such as potato chips and French fries. The current NPDWR for acrylamide was set in 1991. It has a maximum contaminant level goal (MCLG) of zero based on its classification as a probable human carcinogen (cancer causing substance). Acrylamide has a treatment technique (TT) requirement that limits the allowable monomer levels in products used during drinking water treatment, storage, and distribution to 0.05 percent acrylamide in polyacrylamide coagulant aids. It also limits the dosage of these products to a maximum of 1 milligram per liter (mg/L) or parts per million (ppm). The USEPA will solicit information from the public on the use of polyacrylamide in drinking water facilities to assist with the regulatory review process.

Epichlorohydrin is mainly converted to Bisphenol A diglycidyl ether, which is found in epoxy resins and is a precursor to monomers for other resins and polymers. Epichlorohydrin also has an MCLG of zero based on it being a probable human carcinogen. The NPDWR currently imposes a TT requirement that limits the allowable level of epichlorohydrin monomer in the polymer that is added to water as a flocculent to 0.01 percent residual epichlorohydrin monomer in polymer products dosed at 20 mg/L (ppm). The USEPA is also soliciting information on the use of epichlorohydrin-based polymers in drinking water facilities for input to the regulatory revisions.

Tetrachloroethylene is a common liquid used for dry cleaning fabrics, and trichloroethylene is used as an industrial solvent. The NPDWR has established an MCLG of zero for both tetrachloroethylene and trichloroethylene due to probable human carcinogen risks. Each contaminant has a maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 0.005 mg/L, based on analytical feasibility (practical quantitation limit).

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AWWA is encouraging Congress to: 1) create a federal Water Infrastructure Bank to provide low-cost capital to water utilities and State Revolving Funds, 2) support reform and expanded capitalization of State Revolving Loan Fund programs, and 3) remove water projects from the state volume cap on Private Activity Bonds.

The AWWA is also urging Congress to support security legislation applying to water only: 1) it does not include authority to order the use of "inherently safer technology", 2) it provides protection of sensitive information, and 3) it specifies that personnel who are not associated with the water system should not be involved with vulnerability assessments or site security plans.

More information on the AWWA Fly-In can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/ye7zk83>. AE2S will continue to follow these key issues and report in future issues of The Update. ■

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The USEPA will consider public comments or any new relevant data submitted for its review of NPDWRs for the contaminants. The announcement that the USEPA intends to revise the NPDWRs is not a regulatory decision. Rather it initiates a regulatory process that will involve more detailed analyses of health effects, treatment feasibility, benefits, costs, and other regulatory matters. These results do not obligate the USEPA to revise an NPDWR if the USEPA determines the revisions are no longer appropriate. Comments must be received by May 28, 2010.

AE2S will continue to follow the NPDWR revisions as more information becomes available. More information on this topic and where to submit comments can be found at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/review/second_review.html or by contacting AE2S. ■

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