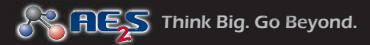


# The Update

June 2010



## Arsenic Update

**T**he US Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA's) Science Advisory Board (SAB) has conducted a review of inorganic arsenic as it relates to the human health cancer hazard and dose-response assessment that appear in the Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS). If the assessment is finalized as drafted, the 1-in-10,000 cancer risk level would change from 0.5 micrograms/liter ( $\mu\text{g/L}$ ) to 0.14  $\mu\text{g/L}$  for women and 0.21  $\mu\text{g/L}$  for men, which would approximately double the cancer incidence associated with current Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) of 10  $\mu\text{g/L}$ .

The USEPA has not stated how it will respond to the final risk assessment, but arsenic was highlighted in the Six-Year Review. Comments received by SAB's arsenic workgroup have identified concerns about the evaluation, including those raised by the American Water Works Association (AWWA) and the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA), about procedures and commenting. AWWA and AMWA would also like to see caution in the decision due to the costs and uncertain health benefits of the new low arsenic concentrations.

More information on this topic, as well as the letter written to the USEPA from AWWA and AMWA, can be found at <http://www.awwa.org/publications/StreamlinesArticle.cfm?itemnumber=54369>. AE2S will continue to follow this topic and provide more information as it becomes available. ■

**T**he fiscal year 2011 (FY11) National Water Program (NWP) Guidance, released in May, describes key actions needed to accomplish the goals proposed in the USEPA's Strategic Plan. The USEPA Strategic Plan is a five-year plan that identifies environmental and human health outcomes to the public and how they intend to achieve those goals, which are:

## FY11 National Program Manager Guidance

- Protect public health by improving the quality of drinking water, making fish and shellfish safer to eat, and assuring that recreational waters are safe for swimming;
- Protect and restore the quality of the nation's fresh waters, coastal waters, and wetlands; and
- Improve the health of the large aquatic ecosystems across the country.

The FY11 Guidance lists two main priorities to ensure safe and clean water for everyone. They are: 1) Sustainable Communities – Making Communities More Sustainable, and 2) Healthy Watersheds – Restoring and Protecting America's Watersheds. Other priorities the FY11 Guidance supports are: 1) Taking Action on Climate Change; 2) Assuring the Safety of Chemicals; 3) Expanding the Conversations of Environmentalism and Working for Environmental Justice; and 4) Building Strong State and Tribal Partnerships.

The NWP will evaluate the progress made toward the goals from the USEPA Strategic Plan through progress reports, headquarter and regional discussion meetings, and evaluations. Changes from the FY10 Guidance include the new top priorities listed above to reflect the new Administrator and NWP priorities. New sections on children's environmental health, protection and restoration of urban waters, and response to climate change have also been added. A number of measures have been added, deleted, or modified, as well, including topics such as progress of tribal homes that are provided safe drinking water, tracking for small systems to comply with regulations and funding requirements, and numeric nutrient water quality standards for total nitrogen and total phosphorus.

The complete FY11 Guidance and Appendices can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/npmguidance/index.htm>. The new Strategic Plan (2010-2015) is scheduled to be available for comment later this month with submission of the final plan in late September. More information on the Strategic Plan and previous Strategic Plans can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm>. ■

## USGS Groundwater Survey

**T**he US Geological Survey (USGS) has published a report on their findings of untreated groundwater sources. The study's objectives were to evaluate:

(continued on back)

# The Update

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If you have any questions concerning the content of this newsletter, please contact Melissa Cassanelli, at 701-746-8087 or [Melissa.Cassanelli@ae2s.com](mailto:Melissa.Cassanelli@ae2s.com). Web site links contained in this issue are posted as clickable links at [www.ae2s.com/UpdateLinks](http://www.ae2s.com/UpdateLinks).

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## DWSRF Reauthorization

**T**he US House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee has approved the Subcommittee on Energy and Environment's Assistance, Quality, and Affordability (AQUA) Act. The AQUA Act reauthorizes \$14.7 billion for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) over the next three years, beginning with \$1.8 billion in 2011. The bill gives priority to water systems serving disadvantaged communities that cannot afford to comply with new drinking water standards. The AQUA Act also mandates the screening of endocrine disrupting chemicals in drinking water and changes the definition of "lead-free" for plumbing from 8% to 0.25% lead content on wet surfaces.

AE2S will continue to follow this bill and provide updates as more information becomes available. To read the full text of the bill please visit <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d111:h.r.05320> or contact AE2S for more information. ■

## (USGS Groundwater Survey from first page)

1) the occurrence of contaminants and their significance to human health; 2) whether contaminants found in the untreated water appear after treatment; and 3) the occurrence of contaminant mixtures. The study determined that more than one in five source water samples contained at least one contaminant at levels greater than human-health benchmarks, which would require treatment or blending with higher quality water sources to decrease the contaminant levels. Approximately 70 percent of the contaminant concentrations above the human-health benchmarks came from naturally occurring contaminants, such as radon and arsenic. Man-made contaminants made up the remaining 30 percent of contaminant concentrations above the human-health benchmarks. Samples for treated water showed that contaminants detected in source water often were detected in treated water. However, according to the study, "contaminants detected in both treated and source water were often less than one-tenth of human-health benchmarks and many of the detections were several orders of magnitude less than benchmarks." Contaminants typically occurred simultaneously with other contaminants rather than solitarily. The mixtures of two or more contaminants at levels approaching human-health benchmarks were generally inorganic, naturally occurring contaminants. The study identifies which contaminant mixtures may be of most concern in groundwater used for public water supply and can help researchers to target and prioritize toxicity assessments of contaminant mixtures.

To read the full report and to view maps of the study locations, please visit [http://water.usgs.gov/nawqa/studies/public\\_wells/](http://water.usgs.gov/nawqa/studies/public_wells/) or contact AE2S for more information. ■

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