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The Association of State Drinking Water Administrators (ASDWA) would like to thank EPA for being open to communications and recommendations from ASDWA's Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) Workgroup. ASDWA formed the CCR Workgroup with its state administrators and staff to address the upcoming CCR changes in America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 (AWIA), Section 2008, which:

- Amends existing SDWA provisions regarding annual consumer confidence reports (CCRs) by requiring reports to include additional information on corrosion control, exceedances, and violations.
- Requires EPA to revise its CCR regulations to improve readability and accuracy, provide biannual delivery for large systems, and facilitate electronic delivery.

After conducting several conference calls with the CCR Workgroup and review by the ASDWA Board, we are providing the following recommendations below organized by CCR Frequency, Readability, Electronic Delivery, and Risk Communication for EPA to consider when revising the CCR regulation.

CCR Frequency

For the requirement of providing the CCR biannually for public water systems that serve 10,000 or more persons, ASDWA recommends that this be the same CCR that is already required, sent twice. The first delivery would be by July 1st (as the current CCR regulation mandates) and the second delivery would be by December 31st, both using the same data from the previous calendar year. With delivery of paper CCRs, this would entail two mailings or door hangings. With electronic delivery under the current distribution flexibilities, this would entail two notifications to customers.

Generating two **different** reports would be a large burden on state staff that are already spending a lot of time preparing CCRs, tracking compliance, and providing assistance to systems. Most states play a significant role in CCRs – 18 states provide resources or assistance, 9 states provide a draft CCR, and 9 states produce most or all of the CCRs for the systems.

Additionally, the review time of systems' compliance with the CCR regulation by state staff and rerunning data, even if it is the same, is a big undertaking with regards to time and resources. While acknowledging the statutory requirement, generating two different CCR reports per year would effectively double the time and resources necessary for states to review and track CCRs for systems that serve 10,000 or more – even if systems prepared their own CCRs.

As ASDWA has previously reported in its [2019 Analysis of State Drinking Water Programs' Resources and Needs](#), states are taking on a larger workload with limited resources, and the work associated with the CCR is referenced throughout the report. The report estimates that states spend approximately 58,656 hours on CCR work in 2020, and this number would increase with a second CCR review cycle. With tight budgets due to eroded resources and funding, the burden to state staff should be minimized in the revised CCR regulation

Readability

ASDWA recommends that EPA improve the readability of the CCR by making it more concise, providing information in more graphical ways, and utilizing weblinks to utility webpages for more detailed information for customers. Many excellent public health communication resources, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) [Clear Communication Index](#), are available to improve the readability of CCRs.

The current CCR is problematic, based on the literacy level, and this issue need to be remedied. The literacy level of the CCR is at the grade 11-14 level, which is too high for the general public. Instead, EPA should revise CCR required language to the closer to grade 5-6 level.

The current CCR is bogged down by tables of non-detects and information that does not concisely present immediate threats to consumers. We encourage EPA to shorten the CCR by only including information that is necessary for the customer's knowledge, and for transparency purposes encourage customers to access weblinks for more or full information on system contaminants on the public water system's webpage. Additionally, we encourage EPA to utilize graphics to improve the display of information to increase readability.

Electronic Delivery

For the electronic delivery method of the CCR, ASDWA recommends EPA consider issues with contract operators and this delivery method. Some community water system owners/operators own and or operate multiple systems, each with different CCRs. The challenge is that their billing software does not allow printing a unique web URL to the CCR on their bills. ASDWA requests additional flexibility around the requirements to “deliver directly” the CCR to the customers, including allowing the utility to provide a single URL for multiple CCRs.

Another possible solution would be to expand the interpretation of “direct delivery” by allowing the URL to direct customers to a CCR home page. This would allow for retrieval of not only the current year CCR for multiple systems a contract operator is responsible for, but also

allow systems that maintain previous years of CCR documents and additional CCR information for customers to be quickly located on a single webpage as being “directly delivered.” It is difficult to make the water systems have the exact URL on the bill/postcard – there are many characters that must be exactly correct and checked for accuracy to get credit for “direct delivery.”

Risk Communication

ASDWA recommends that EPA use this opportunity with improving CCR readability to also improve risk communication. As mentioned above on readability, understanding immediate threats and violations is not evident in the current CCR. To improve risk communication, we encourage EPA to develop standard language for systems when they have violations, and when they do not have violations. The current CCR has a negative association with customers, so we suggest EPA find a way to use the CCR to promote positive changes systems have made, while being transparent about violations and interventions taken to resolve them.

We thank EPA in being willing to work with state administrators and ASDWA’s CCR Workgroup to promote changes to the CCR that offer public health benefits without overburdening state staff. We encourage EPA to consult with states and this workgroup going forward through the rulemaking process.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide early input on these important issues. If you have any questions regarding these comments or if ASDWA can be of assistance in another way, please feel free to contact me (aroberson@asdwa.org) or Kevin Letterly (kletterly@asdwa.org).

Best Regards,



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