Message

From: Bender, Emily [Bender.Emily@epa.gov]
Sent: 5/11/2018 2:26:40 PM
To: Dunn, Alexandra [dunn.alexandra@epa.gov]; Gutro, Doug [Gutro.Doug@epa.gov]; Deegan, Dave [Deegan.Dave@epa.gov]; Moraff, Kenneth [Moraff.Ken@epa.gov]; Hamjian, Lynne [Hamjian.Lynne@epa.gov]; Downing, Jane [Downing.Jane@epa.gov]
Subject: FW: ALEXANDRA DUNN CONSIDERS OUR WATER RESOURCES DURING WATER'S WORTH IT MONTH

FYI- This op ed has been issued.

From: Emily Bender [mailto:bender.emily@epa.gov]
Sent: Friday, May 11, 2018 10:16 AM
To: Bender, Emily <Bender.Emily@epa.gov>
Subject: ALEXANDRA DUNN CONSIDERS OUR WATER RESOURCES DURING WATER'S WORTH IT MONTH

EPA New England News Release
Protecting Human Health and the Environment
www.epa.gov/newsroom

EPA New England OPED Submission

May 11, 2018

By: Alexandra Dunn, Regional Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, New England Region

CONSIDER OUR WATER RESOURCES DURING WATER'S WORTH IT MONTH

Spring is the season to celebrate new beginnings as nature sprouts. What better way to connect with nature than to celebrate water? This May, we are happy to observe Drinking Water week and to join the New England Water Communication Collaborative's *Water is Worth It Month*.

Water in all forms is critical to our health, economy, and way of life - and yet it is often taken for granted. Every day, even in times of extreme weather, we rely on safe water for drinking, cooking, bathing, and firefighting. Without much thought, we take showers, flush toilets, and reach for a glass of tap water. This month, let's think about what it takes to maintain our safe and clean drinking water, and ask ourselves what water is worth.

Keeping water clean and operational for citizens takes many hands. In New England, we are fortunate to have thousands of drinking water managers and operators working to sustain the services of safe drinking water. Under a support network sustained by the New England states and by regional and state drinking water associations, these public health servants study and work hard to become certified in their noble profession. They keep up with aging infrastructure and emerging technologies, while continuing to run the plants, fix the leaks, clear the pipes, and communicate with citizens.

There are 2,700 community public water supply systems across New England. Each one has unique challenges. Living on the coast in Rockport Massachusetts, I appreciate the beauty and vulnerabilities of our coastal waters and water infrastructure. As seen during extreme weather events, the battle of nature versus physical infrastructure has erupted in every state in New England, appreciating those vulnerabilities and preparing for the future is important to sustaining our systems.

We face other challenges, including lead, which can be present in our public and household pipes and plumbing, and which needs constant attention. Science has discovered emerging contaminants, like per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) that, in some cases, are present in our ground water. We have also heard about algal blooms as a threat to our water supplies when excess nutrients enter our water systems through direct and stormwater discharges. While these challenges can seem daunting, I am convinced that it is everyone's business to get involved and with all of us pulling together we can make a difference.

We are making progress. We all know that aging infrastructure presents a growing need. New England is one of the first developed regions in the country, and our water infrastructure often reflects its age, as some of our systems are more the 100 years old. Communities face substantial gaps between infrastructure improvement needs and available funds. This is a problem we recognize and a problem we beginning to address. Recently, the U.S. EPA announced a significant increase in funding available for water infrastructure projects. The program, under the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA), is providing up to $5.5 billion in low-cost loans, which could leverage over $11 billion in water infrastructure projects. The time to act and take advantage of this opportunity is now. Prospective borrowers seeking WIFIA credit assistance must submit a letter of interest by July 6, 2018.

We recognize there is more to be done to keep our drinking water clean and safe for us and for future generations. I hope you will join me in thinking more about where your water comes from and thanking the people in your community who work so tirelessly to keep your water clean and running.

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