

“The Safe Drinking Water Act has not been updated for 20 years, which has put our drinking water at risk,” Pallone said. “The crisis in Flint has highlighted the need for action, but water systems nationwide are in dire need of dramatic improvements, including many in my home state of New Jersey. This comprehensive legislation provides the tools and resources that state and local governments need to ensure the public is provided with clean, safe drinking water. I commend the thoughtful work of so many of my Democratic colleagues in helping to craft this comprehensive bill.”

“Nobody denies the importance of water,” Tonko said. “From keeping us healthy and alive to supporting local jobs across the country, water is a fundamental building block to a productive society. Water main breaks can bring everyday life to a screeching halt, while natural disasters including water can destroy homes and take innocent lives from us. Water is not a partisan issue. It is time we are honest and straightforward about the funding levels and other reforms required to bring our water infrastructure into the 21st century. I thank Ranking Member Pallone for his work on what should be a top priority for all of us here in Congress.”

The bill proposes a comprehensive update to existing drinking water standards in addition to improving the resiliency and security of water infrastructure by:

- empowering EPA to set much needed drinking water standards;
- requiring water systems to address risks to their source water from climate change, industrial activity, and terrorism;
- authorizing new investments in lead line replacement, climate resiliency, monitoring technology, and overall drinking water infrastructure;
- and improving compliance and community right to know.

The comprehensive legislation draws on ideas from a number of House Democrats who have introduced bills and put forward ideas on drinking water including from Reps. Brendan Boyle (D-PA), G.K. Butterfield (D-NC), Lois Capps (D-CA), Tony Cardenas (D-CA), Diana DeGette (D-CO), Marcia Fudge (D-OH), John Garamendi (D-CA), Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), Dan Kildee (D-MI), Brenda Lawrence (D-MI), Jerry McNerney (D-CA), Bobby Rush (D-IL), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Jackie Speier (D-CA), and Peter Welch (D-VT).

The proposal also has widespread support from safe drinking water and environmental advocates including the League of Conservation Voters, Sierra Club, Clean Water Action, Environmental Working Group, and Environmental Integrity Project.

“From Flint to Toledo to Charleston, the clean water of too many communities across the country has been jeopardized by decades of ignoring and underinvesting in our water infrastructure and drinking water programs,” said Madeleine Foote, Legal Representative for League of Conservation Voters. **“The legislation introduced today, led by Representatives Frank Pallone and Paul Tonko, takes a tremendous step forward in improving infrastructure and safeguarding drinking water, including by providing schools with the resources they need to protect our children from lead; spurring research into innovative technologies, such as those to increase efficiency and find new methods to combat emerging pollutants; and encouraging communities and water utilities to plan for the impacts of climate change. Every member of the House should support this legislation and work to ensure that no one has to worry that the water coming from their tap is poisoning their family.”**

A one-pager of the bill is available here (<http://democrats-energycommerce.house.gov/sites/democrats.energycommerce.house.gov/files/documents/One%20Pager%20SDWA%20Amendments%20of%202016.pdf>).

A section-by-section of the bill is available here (http://democrats-energycommerce.house.gov/sites/democrats.energycommerce.house.gov/files/documents/SDWA%20Amendments%202016%20Section-by-Section_0.pdf).

The legislative text of the bill is available here (<http://democrats-energycommerce.house.gov/sites/democrats.energycommerce.house.gov/files/documents/SDWA%20Legislative%20Text.pdf>).

Subcommittees:

Environment and the Economy (114th Congress) (</subcommittees/environment-and-the-economy-114th-congress>)



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Summary of H.R. XXXX

SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT AMENDMENTS OF 2016

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Democratic Staff

The Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 2016 would ensure safer water for communities nationwide. The bill would empower EPA to set needed drinking water standards; require water systems to address risks to their source water from climate change, industrial activity, and terrorism; authorize new investments in lead line replacement, climate resiliency, monitoring technology, and overall drinking water infrastructure; and improve compliance and community right to know.

The Bill Will Empower EPA to Set Needed Drinking Water Standards. The bill removes procedural hurdles that have prevented EPA from setting needed drinking water standards. It also increases the pace of regulatory determinations at EPA and sets deadlines for the development of standards on known dangers: lead, perchlorate, perfluorinated compounds, and algal toxins.

The Bill Will Reduce Exposure to Lead in Drinking Water. The bill provides grants for replacement of lead service lines in schools and communities, grants for replacement of school drinking fountains containing lead, and grants for lead monitoring programs in schools. The bill also requires EPA to prepare new guidance for schools planning lead infrastructure replacement and update guidance for schools and child care centers on monitoring, mitigating, and communicating issues with lead contamination.

The Bill Will Improve Climate Resiliency, Security, and Source Water Protection. The bill requires water systems to assess their vulnerabilities to climate change, terrorism, and source water contamination and develop plans to address those vulnerabilities, and provide funding to carry out those plans. The bill also addresses known threats to source water by removing the regulatory exemption for hydraulic fracturing and requiring a strategic plan to address drought.

The Bill Will Invest in Drinking Water Infrastructure. The bill incorporates the provisions of the Assistance, Quality, and Affordability Act to reauthorize and improve the drinking water State Revolving Fund. Improvements to the SRF would increase funding, increase assistance for disadvantaged communities, encourage good management of water systems, and prioritize sustainability.

The Bill Will Increase Compliance With Drinking Water Standards. The bill strengthens reporting to EPA and EPA enforcement authority. It also creates new regulations to require water systems to consider consolidation if they repeatedly fail to comply with drinking water standards.

The Bill Will Strengthen Community Right to Know. The bill provides more effective communication of drinking water problems by requiring EPA to revise the requirements for Consumer Confidence Reports and to create an online inventory of drinking water violations and exceedances, modeled after the Toxic Release Inventory. The bill also requires EPA to report to Congress on disproportionate impacts of drinking water violations, based on the online inventory.

The bill will promote innovation and technology. The bill establishes a grant program to spur the development of real-time drinking water monitoring technology and establishes a certification program for effective water loss and leak control technology. The bill also requires EPA to study the presence of pharmaceuticals and personal care products in drinking water.