Explaining Disparities in Local Drinking Water Bills: New Study Published



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A study was released in December addressing drinking water bills titled:

Keep Your Head Above Water: Explaining Disparities in Local Drinking Water Bills ("Study")

The authors include:

- Ahmed Rachid El-Khattabi
- Kyra Gmoser-Daskalakis
- Gregory Pierce

The stated purpose of the study was to attempt to understand the factors that contribute to disparities in local system water bills.

Residential water bills were examined from 1,720 systems in four states in different regions of the United States. The states included:

- Arizona
- Georgia
- New Hampshire
- Wisconsin

Issues addressed included:

1. Examine how local system bills at a constant consumption level (4,000 gallons per month of 15.14m3) for drinking water vary within and across states, as well as within combined metropolitan statistical areas
2. Study the relationship between local system bills and system-level characteristics

The Study conclusions include:

- A high degree of similarity in median bill amounts between states but substantial variation within them at the metropolitan statistical area and local system scale
- Multivariate analysis suggests that municipally-owned systems are more likely to have lower water bills relative to for-profit systems
- Factors such as purchasing water and having neighboring systems with high bills significantly correlate with higher water bills
- Water systems with high levels of poverty tend to have higher water bills
- Local systems that serve populations with higher levels of income inequality and higher proportions of non-White population tend to have lower water bills

A copy of the Study can be downloaded here.