In*Flow*-Line

The Magazine of the CT Section American Water Works and the Connecticut Water Works Associations Spring 2025



Post-Natural Disaster Assessment Using Drones

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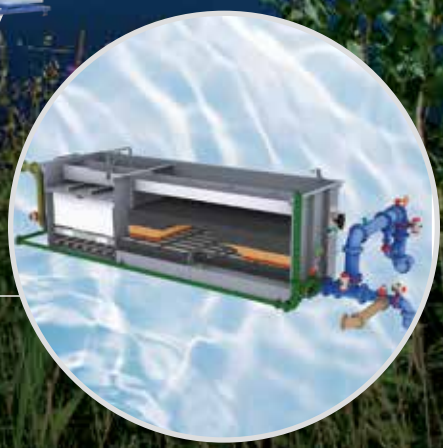




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Volume 20 – Number 1

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Cover: Spring has sprung at the Killingworth Reservoir. *Photo by Richard Rathsack*

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InFlow-Line

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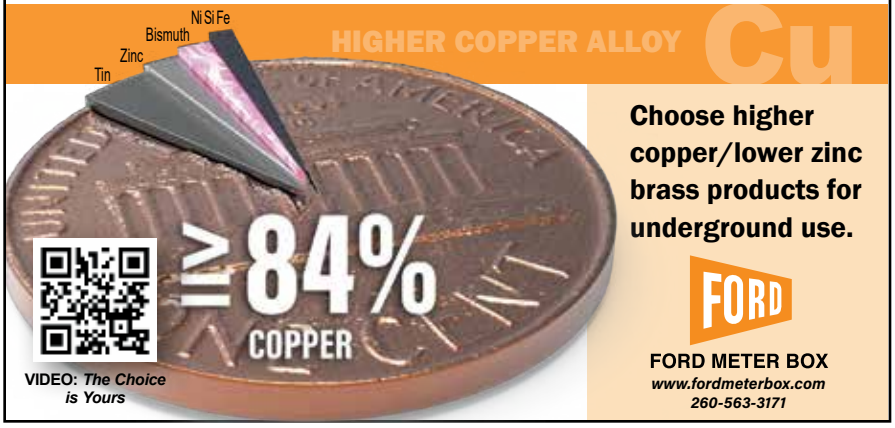
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In-Flow Line: Appreciating the Significance of Water in Our Lives

On March 22, a special light shone on public and private water utilities around the globe. World Water Day was an opportunity to take a moment to appreciate the significance of water in our lives and to recognize the important work we do to provide safe, reliable and affordable drinking water to consumers and communities.

As dedicated and mission-driven water industry professionals, we know that water is the lifeblood of our communities. It fuels the economy, protects public health, improves the quality of life and advances important environmental goals.

As a professional engineer by trade, I am passionate about the drinking water profession and believe water utilities have a unique responsibility to sustainably manage water resources and enhance the quality and security of the water supply while providing for public health and safety. This requires the effective management and stewardship of the water infrastructure that serves customers and the continuation of outstanding water service as we face new challenges from climate change.

Water and climate change are inextricably linked. In recent years, we have seen communities in Connecticut and across the country experience harmful impacts to their drinking water





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due to heavy rains, flooding, drought, hurricanes and failing infrastructure. With more unprecedented weather events occurring and their effect on access to safe drinking water, we are reminded of the powerful and personal role that water plays in our lives. To that end, utilities across Connecticut are spending millions of dollars to invest in infrastructure to provide for present and future water supply requirements, ensure the protection of the existing water supply, and meet the water quality standards of the *Safe Drinking Water Act*.

Since the water sector community often goes unnoticed, I want to thank the unsung heroes who are water practitioners working behind the scenes to protect public health, water quality and the environment. Thank you to all of Connecticut's water professionals who work tirelessly to ensure the reliable delivery of clean, safe water to our homes, schools and workplaces. Please take a stand with me today to encourage public officials to prioritize investments in water infrastructure and emerging issues, including climate change impacts. Let's all recommit to become better stewards of our planet's most essential and precious resource.

The following large (population served greater than 50,000) Connecticut utilities provided the following information regarding the level of infrastructure investment they are undertaking:

- In FY 2024, the Manchester Water Department spent $3.7 million to upgrade various water system components and anticipates an investment of approximately $72 million into the water system over the next five years.
- For FY 2024, MDC committed over $51 million to upgrade various water system components and anticipates an investment of approximately $300 million into the water system over the next five years. Other significant capital investments are also being made in the MDC's wastewater collection system infrastructure and water pollution control facilities.
- In FY 2024, the Regional Water Authority committed over $45 million to upgrade and renew water treatment plants, pipes, pumping stations, and other essential facilities. Over the next five years, RWA plans to invest approximately $330 million in total capital infrastructure.



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Nick Rossi



The Future of Water Funding

And just like that my one-year term as CTAWWA Chair has come and gone!

In my first article I discussed the major challenges we're facing in the water industry today and my belief that despite it all, most of us have a lot to be thankful for in regard to our careers in the water industry. It really is a great gig. It is interesting, it is fun, and I get to contribute to my community. Water infrastructure is all around us and right under our feet. It is ubiquitous!

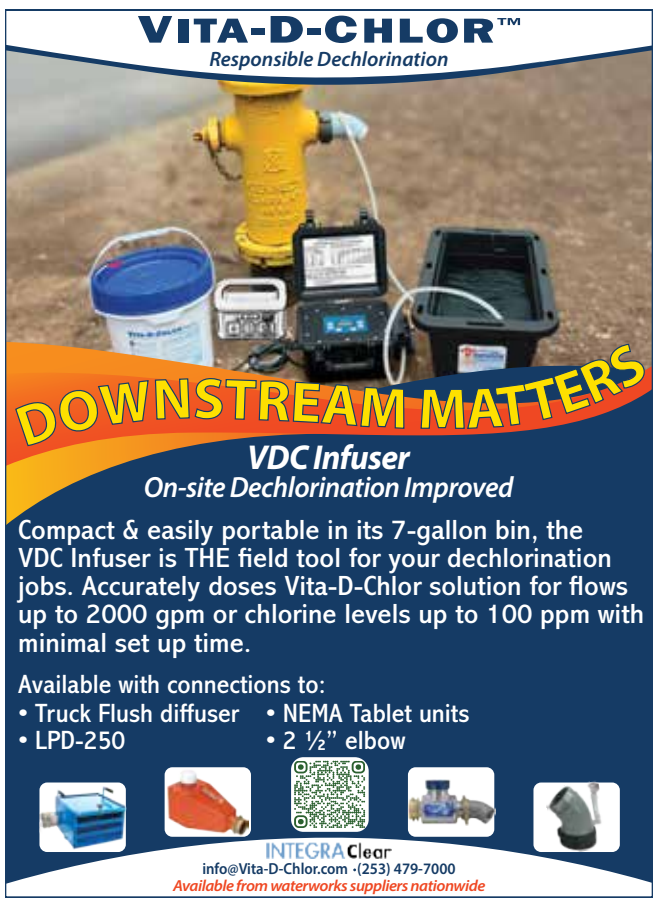
But the challenges I recounted, and in particular the financial impacts of recent regulations, are not going away as quickly as my term as Chair. 2025 is the first year in AWWA State of Water Industry survey history that respondents across the country ranked Financing for Capital Improvements as the number one issue facing the water industry. In my optimistic view of the future, the water industry is able to change the culture of infrastructure funding and utilize additional state and local funds to close the capital improvement funding gap. If we are going to get to a future like that, here is how I think it happens:

- **Build goodwill among our communities and neighbors.** Our utilities are doing this for us already. I've been lucky to review the last few years of CTAWWA Customer Service Award nominations and we have no shortage of water heroes in Connecticut. I'm also impressed with how Public Communications at water utilities continues to grow and be a focus here locally (including in our committees).
- **Consistent and clear public advocacy.** I'd like to see the water industry continue to develop an outspoken voice in the public arena. We've heard it before but it bears repeating: sitting back will not cut it for the water industry. The water industry should write op-eds, create media campaigns, and conduct public advertising to tell our stories and fight for our causes.
- **Look for creative funding methods.** We do not need to reinvent the wheel but we should cast a wide net to explore all possible sources for funding. Our neighbors in the northeast have implemented state-level infrastructure banks, state-level drinking water revolving fund supplements, and other state-level funding programs for water infrastructure. It falls on the water industry to bring ideas like this to the table.

I want to give a special thank you to Scott Bristol of SLR and Amy Velasquez at Regional Water Authority, along with the entire CTAWWA Residuals Committee, for their tireless work in negotiating the recent general permit for discharges to groundwater and surface water with CTDEEP. I'd also like to thank CTDEEP for listening to the water industry's concerns and suggestions.

"2025 is the first year in AWWA State of Water Industry survey history that respondents across the country ranked Financing for Capital Improvements as the number one issue facing the water industry."

CTAWWA will be in great hands with Peter Grabowski's term as Chair beginning in June and I look forward to collaborating with him and all our other CTAWWA volunteers as we advance the future of the water industry!



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Continuing Forward

The AWWA continues to move forward on a number of initiatives including making progress on the various aspects of the Water2050 project and an overlapping set of Legislative and Advocacy priorities.

Specific to Legislative priorities, AWWA's focus is on four primary areas:

- Source Water Protection
- PFAS
- Cybersecurity
- Affordability

The latter three of these primary topics joined with "Infrastructure Financing" as the four topics for discussion with Congressional members across the country during the 2025 AWWA Legislative Fly-In that occurred in early April. While these pressing issues served as focal points during the Fly-In, all will continue to require the consistent support of membership for the foreseeable future.

Advocacy priorities are mirrored by legislative efforts as you'd expect. As we work to address looming issues such as aging infrastructure, compliance with multiple regulatory requirements, and increased capital and O&M costs, we are also facing new priorities. Emerging technologies in the areas of cybersecurity, advances in both the positive and negative aspects of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and innovative monitoring, and testing and treatment advances all require our time and attention. A common question throughout all of our efforts is how we are going to pay for all of these priorities when they all seem to be coming at us simultaneously. Infrastructure financing will continue to be another important conversation with congressional leaders.

As water purveyors seeking to meet our collective goals, we are very familiar with the interconnectedness and dependencies of many of our priorities. We will continue to make efforts to educate consumers and legislators, and to seek out the best ways to integrate our steps forward to address interwoven challenges. We will also be reaching out for financial assistance in any number of ways including the State Revolving Fund (SRF) and *Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act* (WIFIA) options to enable us to meet our regulatory obligations. But as our fiscal pressures increase, so do those of our customers. Affordability continues to be an increasingly evident challenge and to that end, AWWA is advocating for the re-establishment of the Low-Income Household Water Affordability Program (LIHWAP), a program initiated during COVID-19 that expired in 2023.

"We will continue to make efforts to educate consumers and legislators, and to seek out the best ways to integrate our steps forward to address interwoven challenges."

The CT Section AWWA has a number of existing committees that address many of these same issues the industry has prioritized. These committees include Emergency Preparedness and Security, Innovation, Regulations and Research, Source Water Protection, Sustainability, Technology and several associated with Water Treatment to just name a few. If any of these topics are of interest to you, please involve yourself with a committee by reaching out to the Section at *www.ctawwa.org*.

In June at AWWA's Annual Conference and Exhibition (ACE), my term as CT Section AWWA's National Director will come to an end. This has been a unique, enlightening and fulfilling experience that I am very grateful to have been given the opportunity to enjoy. Building on the efforts of those who have served in this role before me, I've been impressed by the depth of knowledge, passion and camaraderie that AWWA offers. I encourage everyone to immerse yourselves in available opportunities and expand your own professional growth. I wish the incoming National Director, Steve Rupar, all the best and much success as he begins his term in representing Connecticut on the AWWA Board of Directors.

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Legislative Session Adjourns June 4

PFAS Contamination

Senate Bill (SB)-1494, which would have required private water utilities to conduct monthly testing to determine whether the level of PFAS in the water supply exceeds 20 parts per trillion (ppt) was the subject of a public hearing in March. Under the bill, if the average PFAS level, over a three-month period, exceeds 20 ppt, the water company would be required to undertake one or more of the following measures: 1) link such system to a different public water supply system that has a PFAS level below 20 ppt; 2) install a PFAS filtering system; or 3) blend well waters that have higher and lower levels of PFAS.

CWWA testified in opposition to the bill which would have undermined efforts already underway to test for and remediate PFAS in accordance with state and federal standards. Although environmental organizations raised concerns that the federal government may roll back certain environmental regulations, including PFAS standards, the Environment Committee gutted the bill.

As amended, the bill: 1) directs the Connecticut Interagency PFAS Task Force to identify sources of funding for the remediation of municipally owned wells that exceed drinking water standards for PFAS, as established by the US EPA and 2) accelerates the phased approach for the testing of public drinking water supplies, as described in such task force's PFAS Action Plan. The bill heads to the Senate for further action.

Another bill, House Bill (HB)-6777, authorizes the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) to allow PURA-regulated water companies to recover costs for capital projects required to comply with state and federal water regulations, such as PFAS remediation and lead service line replacement projects. The bill establishes a process for water companies to apply for, and PURA to approve, these expenses the company incurs between rate cases. If approved, the water company may recover them through a water quality treatment surcharge as a separate line item on customers' bills. The bill was unanimously approved by the Energy and Technology Committee and is awaiting action on the House floor.

Climate Resiliency

Climate resiliency is once again a big topic for lawmakers. Senate Democrats have introduced SB-9 as one of their top priorities. In addition to requiring municipalities to incorporate climate resiliency efforts in their Plans of Conservation and Development, SB-9 includes provisions requiring state agencies to update water supply regulations to incorporate the most current projections on precipitation, temperature or other applicable conditions that could impact water quality, quantity, and distribution, including stream flow regulations, diversion permitting, and water supply planning. The bill also requires the State Water Plan to: 1) consider the potential impact of climate change on the quality of water resources, 2) take into account past conditions and predictions of future temperatures and precipitation when identifying the quantities and qualities of water that are available for public water supply, health, economic, recreation and environmental benefits on a regional basin scale considering both surface water and groundwater, and 3) include recommendations and an implementation plan to reduce impacts from climate change and extreme weather events on water quality and quantity.



Cross Connections

HB-7248 giving the CT Department of Public Health (DPH) the authority to establish policies and procedures to address cross connection issues as it develops regulations was approved by Public Health Committee. The CTAWWA Cross Connections Committee has been working with DPH to update the manual and regulations to address various issues, including providing water utilities with greater flexibility if they are unable to complete cross connection surveys.

Fluoride

In response to concerns that the federal government would no longer require fluoride to be added to drinking water, SB-1326 was introduced requiring water companies that serve 20,000 or more persons to add fluoride to the water supply so as to maintain an average monthly fluoride content of 0.7 of a milligram per liter, provided said average monthly fluoride content shall not deviate greater or less than 0.15 of a milligram per liter from the target value.

Riparian Buffers

HB-7174 establishes riparian buffers and directs CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) to adopt regulations incorporating riparian buffers in the inland wetland and watercourses act. It also 1) requires 5% of Clean Water Funds to be used for nature-based solutions to protect, restore and steward wetlands, watercourses and riparian buffers; and 2) requires, for existing non-FERC regulated hydropower dams with fish passageways, DEEP to adopt regulations outlining conditions to ensure safe, timely and effective fish passage. The bill was approved by the Environment Committee in a party line vote.

DPH Recommendations Regarding Drinking Water

The Public Health Committee approved HB-6977 which revises certain provisions affecting drinking water, including updating the process for reviewing and approving new public water systems to reflect current practice. Under the bill, DPH is required to adopt regulations with requirements for: 1) an application and approval process; 2) location restrictions and construction; 3) water quality testing, monitoring, and treatment; and 4) related inspections and investigations. CWWA reviewed the language and is comfortable that it simply reflects current practice.

The bill also includes provisions 1) providing for biennial license renewal for bulk water haulers, 2) allowing DPH to adopt policies and procedures while in the process of adopting regulations concerning subsurface sewage disposal systems with a 10,000-gallon capacity. The bill is awaiting action in the House.

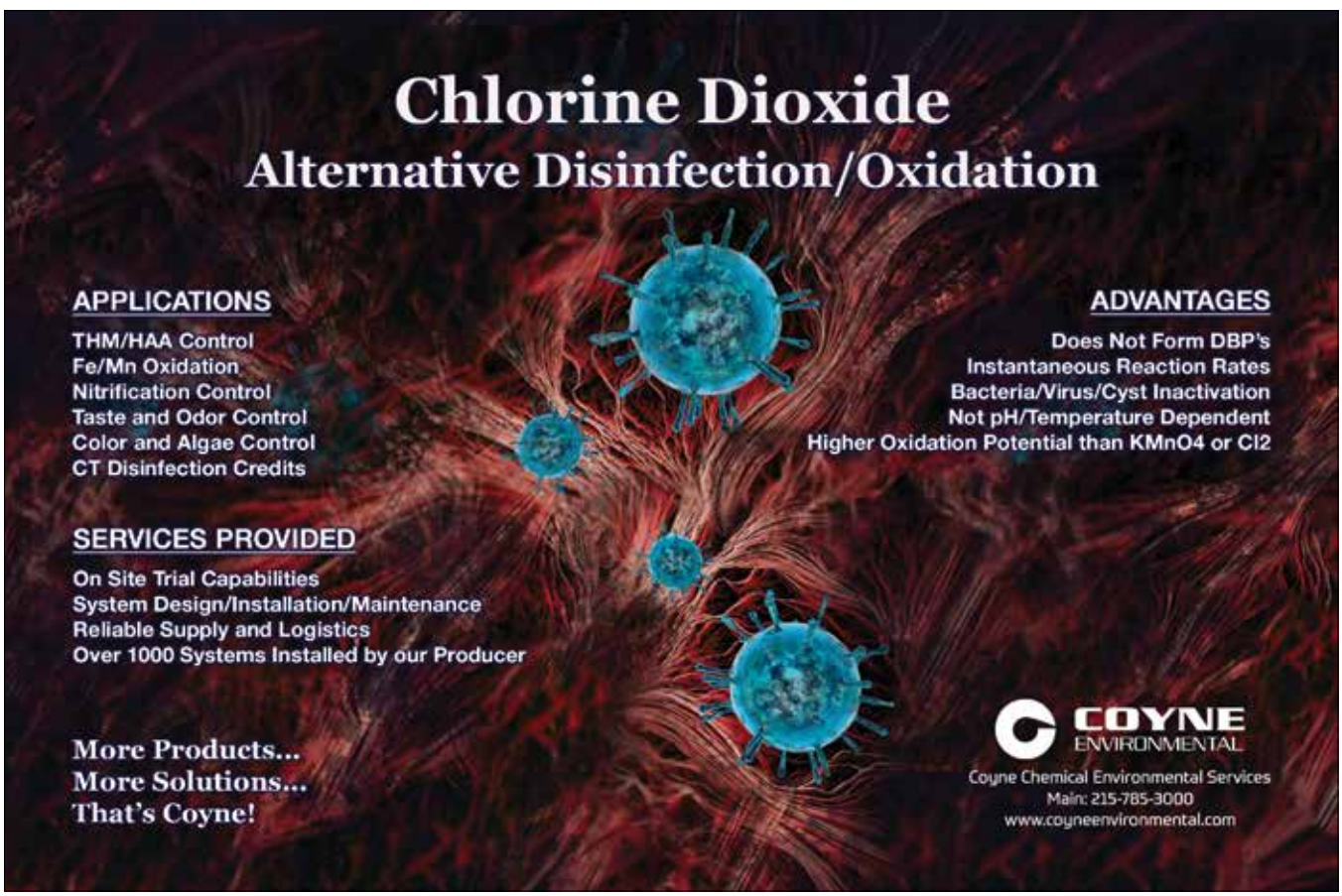
Green Constitutional Amendment

Along with other trade associations and chambers of commerce, CWWA testified in opposition to Senate Joint Resolution 36, which calls for a constitutional amendment granting citizens the right to clean and healthy air, water, soil, ecosystems, and environment and a safe and stable climate for the benefit of public health, safety, and general welfare. If adopted, individual citizens would have automatic legal standing to sue the state and municipalities to challenge projects and permits based on undefined standards that could be used to halt local economic development and critical infrastructure projects.

As a resolution proposing a constitutional amendment, it must be passed by at least three-fourths of the membership of the House and Senate to be placed on the 2026 general election ballot.

CWWA will be providing a legislative wrap-up at a workshop in June.

"As a resolution proposing a constitutional amendment, it must be passed by at least three-fourths of the membership of the House and Senate to be placed on the 2026 general election ballot."



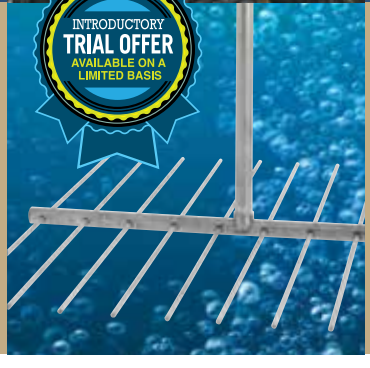


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CWWA Slate of Officers and Directors

The following proposed 2025-2026 slate of nominations for directors, officers and legislative committee chairs was approved by CWWA's Board of Directors at its February 21, 2025 meeting in accordance with the organization's bylaws:

Proposed Officers & Directors

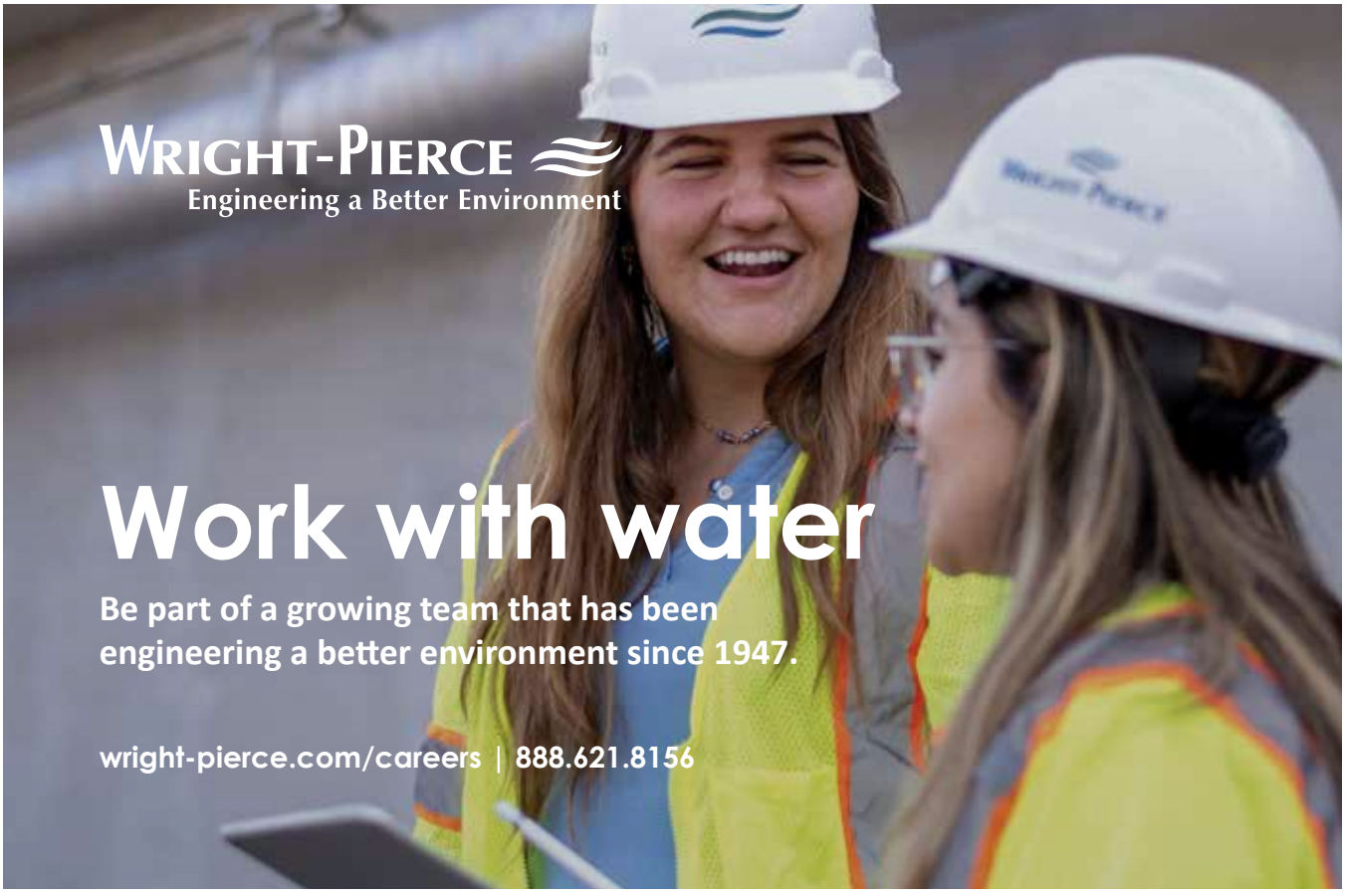
Name	Organization	Position	Type
Peter Fazekas	Aquarion Water Company	President	Private
Lisa Burns	South Norwalk Electric & Water	Vice President	Municipal
Neil Amwake	Wallingford Water	Treasurer	Municipal
Al Fiorillo	Southington Water	Secretary	Municipal
Sunny Lakshminarayanan	Regional Water Authority	Past President	Regional
David Peeling	Connecticut Water Company	Director 1	Private
Nick Salemi	Metropolitan District	Director 1	Regional
Ray Jarema	Berlin Water	Director 2	Municipal
Ben North	East Lyme Water	Director 2	Municipal
George Logan	Aquarion Water Company	Director 3	Private
Michelle Williams	Connecticut Water Company	Director 3	Private

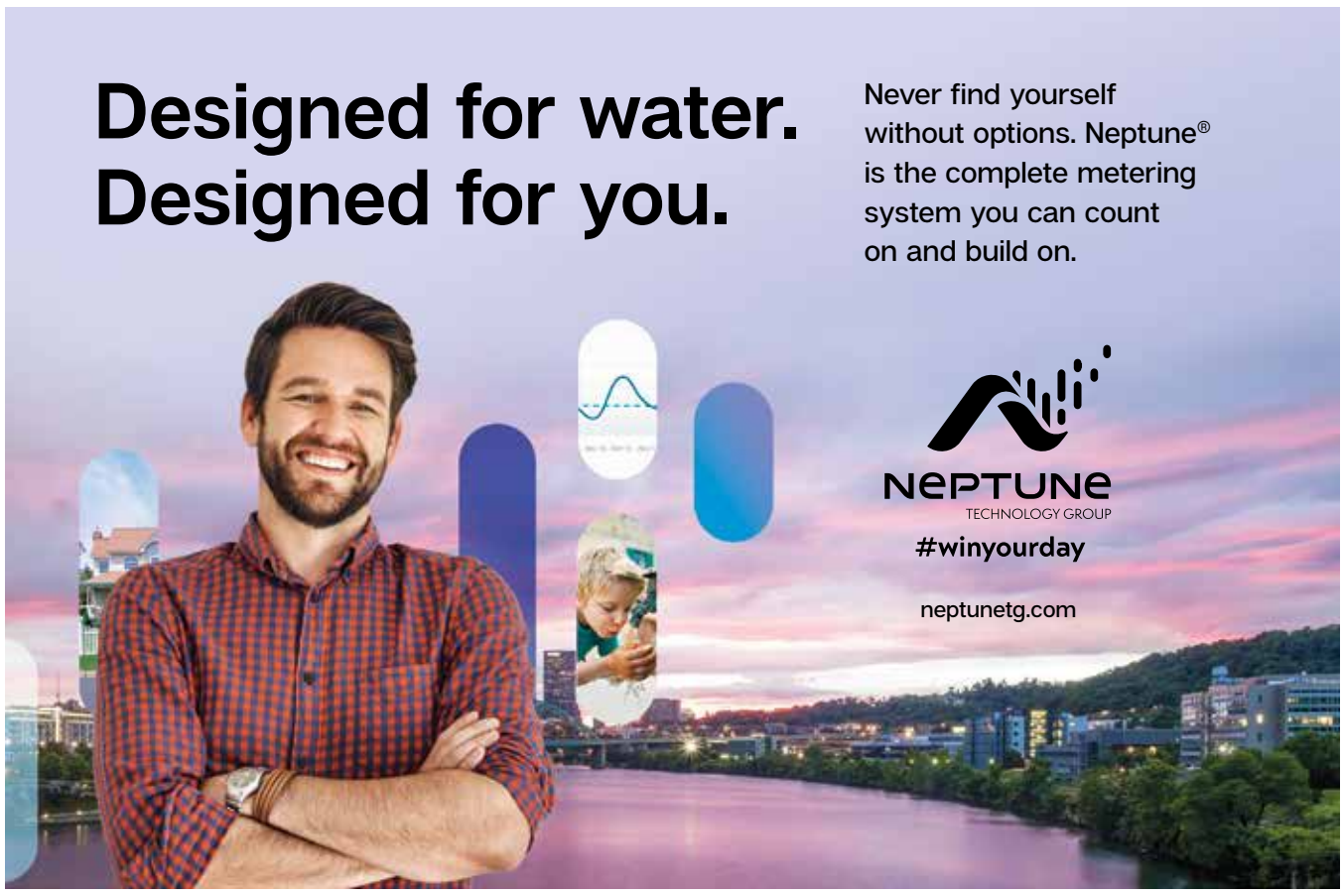
Proposed Legislative Committee Officers

Name	Organization	Position	Type
Nicoletta Blevins	Regional Water Authority	Tri-Chair	Regional
Pat Kearney	New Britain Water Dept.	Tri-Chair	Municipal
Yesher Larsen	Aquarion Water Company	Tri-Chair	Private






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CTAWWA SHINES
at the 2025 AWWA Membership Summit

Photos provided by Judy Soda

The 2025 AWWA Membership Summit took place from January 15-17 at a new location – the Omni Interlocken Hotel in Broomfield, CO. This annual gathering provided a valuable opportunity for networking with Section peers and AWWA staff, engaging in discussions about membership experiences, and gaining insights into AWWA initiatives and updates.

Key highlights included the presentation of the 2024 Member Value Survey results and sessions focused on leveraging AWWA resources to benefit our Section. The event was also a time to celebrate our collective achievements from 2024 and look ahead to 2025 with renewed energy and purpose.

Representing CTAWWA at the summit were Romana Longo, Executive Director, and Judy Soda, Co-Chair of the Membership and Engagement Committee. Their participation was especially rewarding, as CTAWWA took home two prizes in the 2024 Membership Challenge! Our Section achieved a 3% growth goal, earning a $700 reward, and received an additional $1,000 for being the most improved in recruitment among similarly sized Sections.

Congratulations to Romana, Judy, and the entire Membership Engagement Committee for their outstanding work in strengthening CTAWWA's membership and engagement!







FIRST SKI LODGE NETWORKING EVENT A SUCCESS



Powder Ridge in Middlefield, CT, provided the perfect backdrop for our first-ever ski lodge networking event. With clear skies and crisp temperatures, attendees enjoyed an evening of winter fun and valuable connections.

Half of the participants hit the slopes to enjoy skiing and snowboarding, while the other sixteen participants took to the tubing hill. Five more individuals joined the group in the cozy lodge for networking and camaraderie. The delicious wing and slider bar kept everyone fueled, and the warm cookies and hot chocolate provided a sweet ending to a fantastic event.

A special thank you to our generous sponsors, Fred Haines and Harper Haines Fluid Control, for making this event possible. We also extend our gratitude to the Membership Committee for their hard work in arranging such a fun and memorable winter event.

The overwhelming success of this year's event ensures its return next year!

Photos provided by Judy Soda.
















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The 28TH ATCAVE Recap

Photos by Richard Rathsack



The 28th Annual Technical Conference & Vendor Exposition (ATCAVE) was held at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington, CT on March 5, 2024. As Connecticut's premier water supply event, the parking lot was full, 66 vendors filled the exhibition hall, and over 800 attendees (including students from UConn and UHart) were able to enjoy the three presentation tracts, meet with exhibitors, and enjoy the great food and refreshments! New this year, the Member Engagement Committee introduced *Picture Perfect* sessions by providing complimentary professional headshots by Nelly Photography CT.

Congratulations to Max Grabinski, H2M architects & engineers, for being the winner of the Young Professionals (YP) Fresh Ideas Competition. Max will be representing CTAWWA in the YP Fresh Ideas National Competition at ACE in Denver, CO.

Thank you to the ATCAVE Committee for their hard work putting on yet another great ATCAVE event!













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Nestled in upstate New York, Saratoga Springs offers a captivating blend of historical grandeur, natural splendor, and a thriving arts scene. Its mineral springs, long believed to possess healing properties, have drawn visitors for centuries, contributing to the town's unique charm. The Saratoga Hilton is the perfect venue for the 52nd Annual Joint Meeting of the CT Section of the American Water Works Association (CT Section AWWA) and the Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA). This conference will provide water sector professionals with opportunities to earn valuable Training Contact Hours (TCH) through technical presentations, foster connections through networking, and celebrate the accomplishments of Connecticut's outstanding water supply professionals during the Welcome Reception and Awards Dinner.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Cheryl Porter

President of the American Water Works Association Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Water and Field Services at Great Lakes Water Authority in Detroit, MI

Porter's AWWA presidency begins as the association adopts its 2030 Strategic Plan, which emphasizes diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging to empower members in serving their unique communities.



Mike McGill

President of WaterPIO

WaterPIO develops and implements communication strategies covering a wide range of water and wastewater issues that improve our clients' connections with their essential stakeholders without taxing their time.

NETWORKING EVENTS

5k Fun Run and Walk

Thursday, May 22 at 7:00 am
In Support of the Water Equation
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Tour & Pour Networking Event

Thursday, May 22 at 1:00 pm Lunch, tours of the Springs and networking at a brewery.



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We hope to see you in 2026!



Post-Natural Disaster Assessment Using Drones

Article and Photos by Matt LeJeune,
Construction Survey Manager and FAA sUAS Remote Pilot

Photos by Stephen Charton,
Water Infrastructure Manager and FAA sUAS Remote Pilot
Snyder Civil Engineering

According to the Fifth National Climate Assessment,[1] extreme precipitation events in the Northeast region have increased by 60%, the largest increase in the US. This is primarily due to rising temperatures. In general, warmer air holds more moisture, which can result in storms becoming more severe.

Efforts to prevent or mitigate the impact of these extreme and more frequent severe weather events on our collective drinking water infrastructure are actively being pursued by the community at large. It is important to recognize our role as members of the drinking water community and how our response to documenting any natural disaster event, and its effect on the infrastructure associated with the land it occupies, greatly aids in producing effective long-term solutions.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), commonly referred to as drones, fit into the documentation category of short-term efficient assessment aids offering several benefits such as safety, perspective, response time, and cost. In general, the applied use of drones (UAVs) over the past decade has evolved rapidly. Part of the rapid evolution of the use of drones has emerged in post-disaster emergency response and damage assessments. This article presents how one Connecticut water utility used drones as part of the response to the severe storms that damaged Connecticut in August 2024.

According to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as of December 2, 2024, more than 1 million drones are registered in the US with more than 400,000 commercially registered.[2]

A NEW CONNECTICUT STATE RECORD?

On Sunday, August 18 into Monday, August 19, 2024, an extreme weather event impacted Southern New York, Long Island, and Southwestern Connecticut. The National Weather Service (NWS) issued several flash flood warnings and emergency statements to counties in the area. Flash flood emergencies are only issued for exceedingly rare events; the NWS emergency statement carries a prompt that reads "seek high ground immediately," as they pose an immediate risk to human life.

The storm system rapidly intensified as it progressed over these areas causing mudslides, washouts, flooded roadways, and the need for swift-water rescues. According to a final review by the NWS, two rainfall stations in Oxford. Connecticut that measured 13.50 inches and 14.83 inches of precipitation were deemed to not qualify for the record 24-hour rainfall event record due to their proximity to trees that may have influenced the readings. Therefore, the official 24-hour rainfall record in Connecticut remains at 12.77 inches as recorded on August 19, 1955 during Hurricane Diane. Had those measurements in Oxford been confirmed, the August 2024 storm would have been recognized as a 1 in 1000-year event. Rainfall in Sandy Hook, CT did qualify as a 1 in 500-year event recording 12.17 inches in a 24-hour period. Monroe, Shelton, and Newtown all recorded rainfall amounts of approximately 10 inches in the same timeframe.



THE STORM'S APPROACH TO THE NEWTOWN WELLFIELD

The Aquarion Water Company operates two wells and a treatment building at the Newtown Wellfield. Although potable drinking water in this water system is also able to be supplied by an interconnection, the Newtown Wellfield is the primary and typically sole active source of water supply for Aquarion's Newtown system serving approximately 4,500 customers. The wellfield is located along the Pootatuck River and is located within the 100-year flood zone which is also known as a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). This area is mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency as having a 1% annual chance of a flood equaling the "base flood" elevation.

Aquarion Water Company dispatched operators to several low-lying facilities to collect field observations around 2:00 pm on August 18, 2024 as the flood alerts were issued and rain continued to fall. The operators reported water up to the concrete barrier well mounds at the Newtown Wellfield. The determination was made to turn off the well field until the water receded as it was not known at the time how high the water levels would reach.



Figure 1: Pre-Flood Conditions. Looking East towards the Newtown Well Field. March 26, 2019.

THE STORM'S IMPACT

Aquarion Water Company knew that a downstream railroad culvert, which normally conveys the water of the Pootatuck River and Cold Spring Brook, was a constriction point susceptible to a blockage (damming) or a general failure. Due to the flooded area, the culvert could not be inspected. Aquarion Water Company had evaluated using small boats or canoes to assess the situation, but safety to personnel and the limited ground-level perspective made this option unfeasible.

BY ~~LAND~~, ~~SEA~~, OR AIR

Aquarion Water Company retained Snyder Civil to help with assessment using their drone and pilots. In the past, Snyder Civil had utilized the drone at the same site for aerial imagery (as seen in Figure 1), so obtaining updated aerial imagery was a natural choice. The aerial nature offered by the use of drones allows for unimpeded access to the area along with a wider perspective to capture the magnitude of impacts. The drone's simultaneous photo and video collection allows UAV pilots to document the extent of the damage for documentation records and assessments, and the real-time video feed in this scenario allowed the pilots to discover a ground access location to the railroad culvert.



Figure 2: Post-Flood Conditions. Looking East Northeast at the receding flood waters at the Newtown Well Field. August 20, 2024.

Without directly witnessing the event, the observation of floodwaters overtopping CT Route 25 meant the flood height was above the eaves and into the roofline of the treatment building. After discussion with the Aquarion Water Company operators it was understood the entire building was in fact underwater and was a total loss.

As shown in Figure 2, there is evidence of flood waters overtopping the silt-stained South Main Street. Upon arriving onsite, Snyder Civil parked on the opposite side of South Main Street several feet above the grade of the road where there was also mud and debris from the flood waters. However, this location offered Snyder Civil's pilots an elevated position to maintain line of sight during flight operations.

AFTER TAKE-OFF

Downstream of the wellfield and treatment building is the railroad bed carrying two tracks. The railroad bed, for perspective, is roughly 230 feet wide at its base and rises approximately 70 feet from the surrounding ground elevation at normal water level. The stone arch culvert, roughly 12 to 14 feet in width, carried the combined waters of the aforementioned Pootatuck River and Cold Stone Brook (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Pre-Flood Conditions, Looking Northeast toward the Stone Arch Culvert (upstream side). March 26, 2019.

The drone's live feed on the controller began to reveal what had happened. A near-complete failure of the railroad embankment and culvert had occurred with only a portion of the outlet side of the culvert/embankment remaining. As the drone was maneuvered around to gain more perspective, we could see the materials of the embankment littering the downstream side of the watercourse along with a rainbow sheen of oils on the surface of the water (Figures 4-7).



Figure 4: Post-Flood Conditions. Looking Northeast toward the Stone Arch Culvert (upstream side). August 20, 2024.



Figure 5: Post-Flood Conditions. Looking Southeast along the tracks. Upstream pictured right, Downstream pictured left. August 20, 2024.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), commonly referred to as drones, fit into the documentation category of short-term efficient assessment aids offering several benefits such as safety, perspective, response time, and cost.

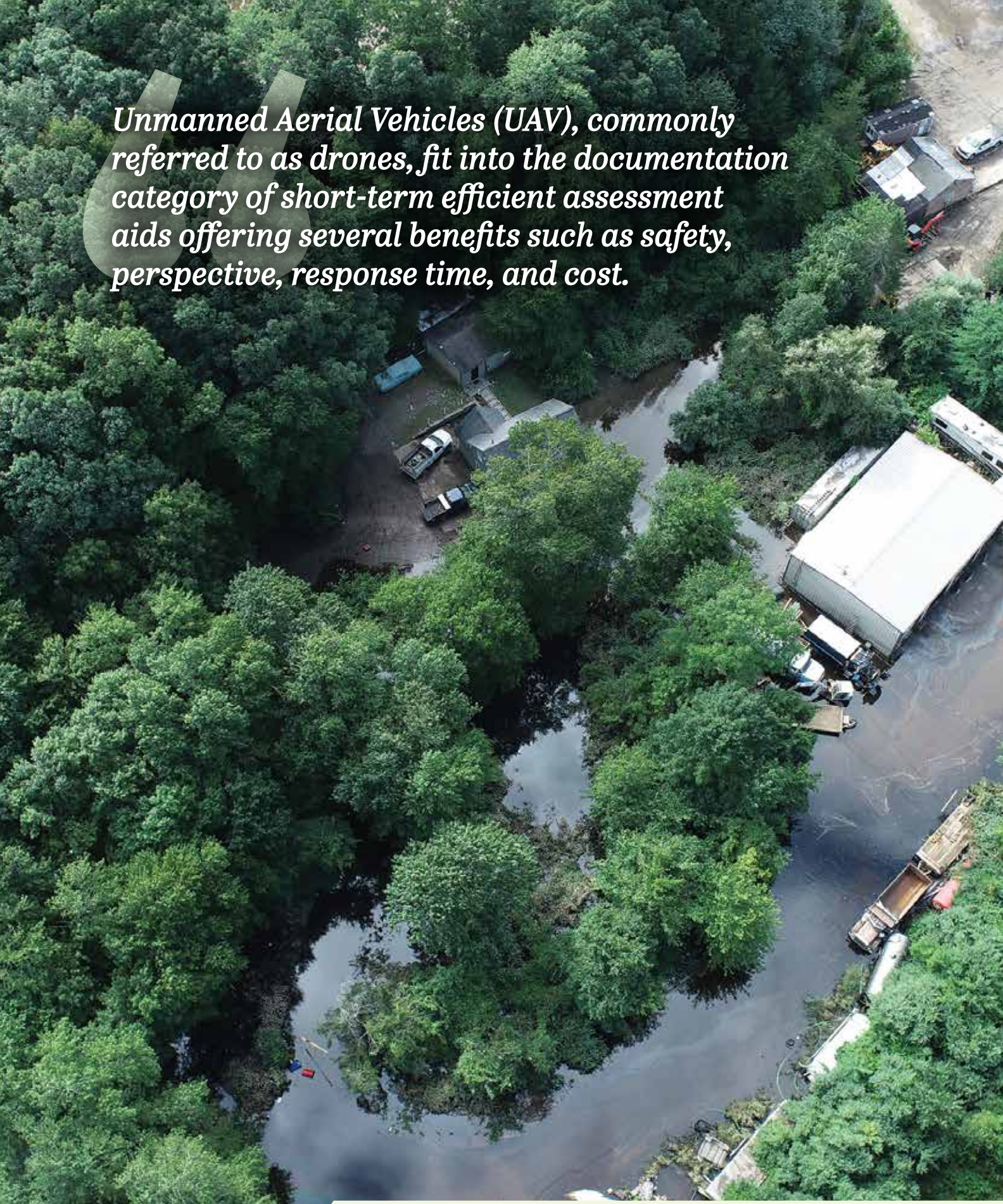


Figure 6: Post-Flood Conditions. Looking South from the upstream side of the culvert. August 20, 2024.

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Drone Restrictions

The FAA has established rules and regulations regarding drone use in national airspace. FAA regulations 14 CFR Part 107, the small Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) rule, permits UAS under 55 pounds in the airspace from ground level to 400' Above Ground Level (AGL) for visual line-of-sight operations. The flight as described in this article was able to be performed because a favorable set of conditions were met to allow for takeoff and to adhere to this rule. Although Snyder Civil was able to respond to the flood damages after the August storms, there could have been temporary flight restrictions put in place if local emergency services were required to respond to immediate life-threatening situations. For example, this past September 2024 when Hurricane Helene severely impacted Western North Carolina, the FAA imposed temporary drone flight restrictions on all pilots who were not otherwise authorized as emergency personnel. This is because private drone flights place too much risk on emergency personnel responding to immediate rescue operations regardless of whether the emergency personnel themselves are utilizing drones or manned aircraft to carry out their emergency operations. Based on reports in the national news, it is known that people of the general public were operating drones despite this restriction as they were delivering water or supplies to friends, neighbors, or relatives trapped by the flood waters related to Helene.

Similar to any other aviation flight, drone flights must go through mission planning and a pre-flight checklist set of procedures to ensure safe operation and adherence to the regulations. Some major considerations are the proximity to airports, other flight restrictions such as Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFR) or Notices to Air Missions (NOTAM) warnings, the weather at the time of flight (visibility and wind), and what site conditions need to be taken into consideration such as power lines, buildings, towers. For example, the Newtown Wellfield is near the Oxford, Connecticut airport (OXC) and the class D airspace restrictions surrounding it. Airspace around airports can have different classifications determined by the size and nature of each airport. One way to visualize airspace restrictions is an upside-down tiered wedding cake centered on the airport.

Some airspaces, such as those around airports, require approval for drone flights which may be denied. However, several flight heights may be submitted at one time for the same area and many software applications depict restricted areas along with an idea of the likelihood of receiving approval for a flight as requested. As the Newtown Wellfield is located entirely in class G airspace and does not overlap with Oxford Airport's airspace, prior authorization was not required for the post-disaster assessment flight.

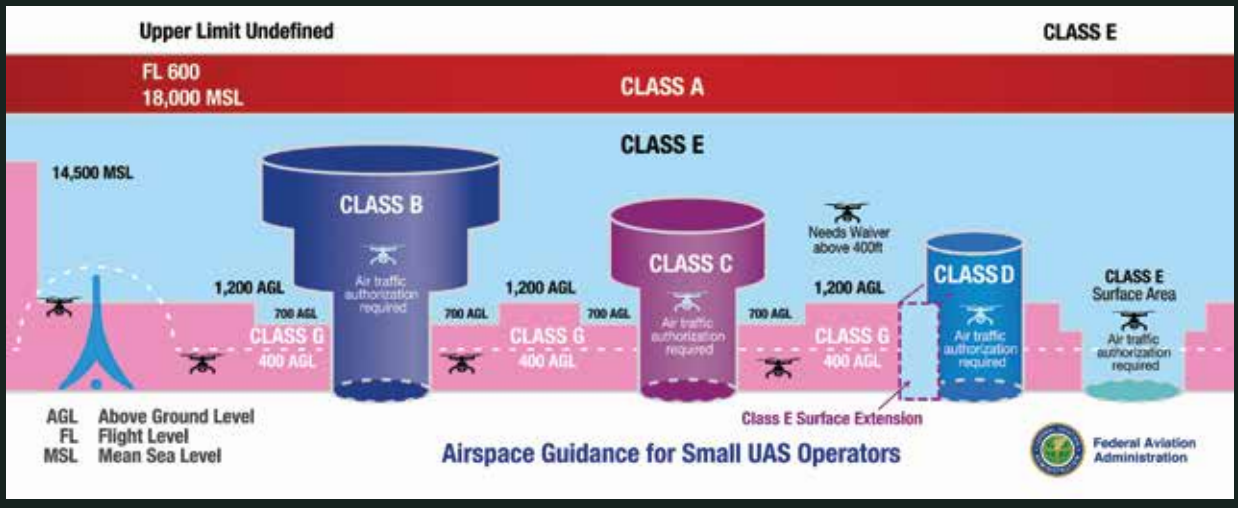


Figure 8: Airspace Guidance for Small UAS Operators.

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Figure 7: Post Flood Conditions. Looking West-Southwest from the downstream side of the culvert. August 20, 2024.

Shortly after landing, Snyder Civil relayed to the Aquarion Water Company personnel that the drone's live feed identified point of access a few minutes away and were going to head there next for some ground-level photos. The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's emergency response and spill assessment division, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, and other agencies requested copies of the images and video due to their value in the assessment and documentation of the storm and flood damages. Ultimately, Aquarion Water Company's decision to reach out for drone services combined with Snyder Civil's ability to respond promptly allowed for same-day damage assessment results to be shared with a larger group of decision-makers during the post-disaster damage assessment process.

> *The drone can follow pre-programmed flight paths and elevations.*

DRONE USES AND THE DRINKING WATER COMMUNITY

- Other uses of drones in the water industry include stand-by inspection. The drone operator can share live feed (and record) video and photos with systems operators of infrastructure that may not be accessible by foot such as a water main suspended under a bridge over a river.
- Drones also do not need to be manually controlled for their flight paths, meaning progress photos of construction projects can be taken from the same location, at the same angle, and in the same direction over and over again on separate dates.
- The drone can follow pre-programmed flight paths and elevations.
- The drone can also fly a pre-defined boundary in a grid pattern where the drone collects data using either a photo sensor or lidar sensor, or both, along with surveyed ground control points (targets) that have unique x, y, and z values and post-processing



software can generate a high-resolution orthophoto and/or point cloud data sets that can then be used for mapping, elevation analysis (contours), verification of existing conditions, quantity computations, or general horizontal distance measurements. This data is capable of achieving accuracies within a tenth of one foot, which is not survey grade, but is sufficient to produce a valuable end product for a variety of purposes.

CONCLUSION

On the typical timeline of any new technology's progression, drones are no longer in the crawl or walk phase of their acceptance or use. Drones are in the "run" phase of their use and have realized value to the various industries they serve. The value of drones, and drone programs, continues to increase as newer technologies refine the data collection via various sensors, increase battery life, increase precision, and carry greater payloads. The inherent value provided by the drone to offer a unique perspective, rapidly collect data, and do it all in a safe and timely manner has provided many benefits to not only the drinking water community but many aspects of our lives.

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2. Federal Aviation Administration, "Drones by the Numbers", *https://www.faa.gov/node/54496*, referenced 12/2/24.

> ***Drones are in the "run" phase of their use and have realized value to the various industries they serve.***



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CALL FOR ABSTRACTS FOR A PFAS SEMINAR

To Be Held On August 13, 2025

This is an opportunity to submit abstracts to present at the PFAS Planning, Piloting, and Full-Scale Experience Seminar.

A half-day seminar for knowledge sharing and training on the implementation of PFAS removal treatment for drinking water systems. This event is being organized by the CTAWWA Water Treatment Plant Operations and Maintenance Committee.

Criteria for Selection

Originality, significance of work, audience range, quality of abstract, and applicability to CTAWWA members.
For case studies, local projects preferred.

Suggested Topics

Any and all topics related to PFAS removal treatment for drinking water systems, including funding, sampling, source water assessments, treatment planning, piloting, demonstration studies, permitting, construction, and operations.

What to Submit

For full consideration, the speaker biography and detailed outline of the 30-minute presentation must be submitted by the deadline indicated below. The course will be presented to the CT Department of Public Health for CEU approval for attendees. Please complete the information in our online form including presentation title, a short description of the presentation, and names of presenters.

Where to Submit

Our online form is located at *https://ctawwa.wufoo.com/forms/z4hoijy1rxli8h/*.

Deadline

Submissions are due by May 30, 2025.
Please note that the Committee intends to notify selected presenters by June 13, 2025.

Questions

Please email Romana Longo at *longoctawwa@gmail.com*.

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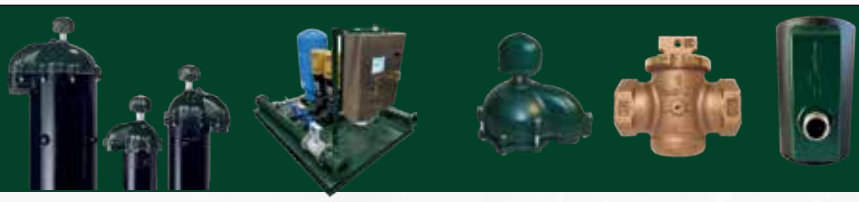
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The Buyers' Guide consists of two sections:

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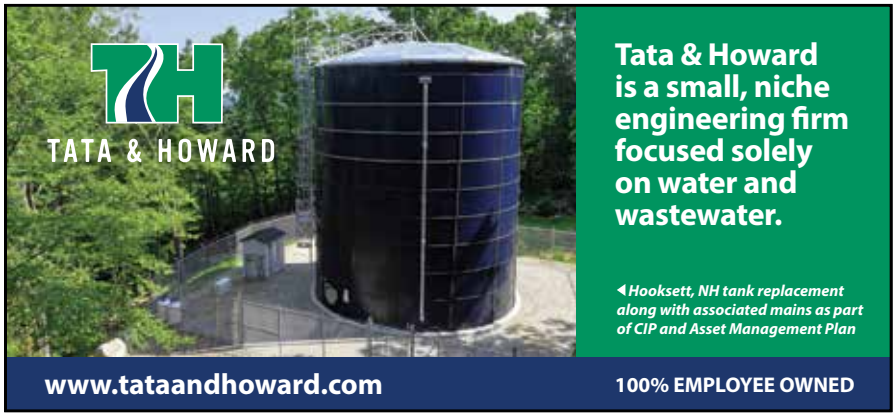
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THE POWER OF SANITATION in a Girl's Education

AN INTERVIEW WITH water for people

Meet Lennie, a passionate young woman whose journey with Water For People began in 2015, when she was only 11 years old. That was the year Water For People partnered with Lennie's school, Chilomoni Primary, and built bathrooms, handwashing facilities, and menstrual hygiene management units to support students' sanitation and hygiene needs. Soon a Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene club emerged to promote sanitation and hygiene among students. Lennie volunteered to be a leader in the club.

"Sanitation is important because it makes our class look beautiful," says Lennie during an interview with Water For People. "It helps us students be hygienic, so we won't get diseases like diarrhea or cholera. These diseases can kill, they can make someone be absent from school and fail exams."

Lennie took a special interest in promoting these practices among her female classmates.

"I've always wanted to help people," explains Lennie, reflecting on her experience as a club leader. "I enjoyed helping other girls understand how to use the menstrual hygiene facilities with support from our WASH teacher." This, along with the new menstrual hygiene units brought significant changes, allowing young girls to attend classes without interruption

Lennie's desire to support her peers, especially girls, led her to promote hygiene and menstrual health. "The activities and workshops with Marjorie and the Water For People staff made a huge impact. We learned so much through games and activities," recalls Lennie. "I remember we used to play World Toilet game we used to kick the ball straight into a hole on the banner kind of board. When you have missed it, you would go and clean the hole, a representation of the toilet hole. Even now in my university life, I still do it. Quite amazing right?"

Almost a decade later, Lennie's journey has only grown more remarkable. Her early involvement in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene sparked an interest that carried into her current studies. Today, she's a third-year student at Malawi Catholic University, pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies.

"Lennie is doing incredibly well," says Lennie's mother, Ellida Samama. "She's always on the Dean's List, and I believe her love for sanitation and hygiene played a big role in her choosing Environmental Studies."

Lennie's story is an example of the transformative power that access to essential facilities such as water, sanitation, and menstrual hygiene has on young people – especially for girls' education. Through Water For People's work, young people's goals are supported. Water For People celebrates Lennie's success and continue leveraging long-term partnerships to achieve sustainable results for *#EveryoneForever.*



11-year-old Lennie at her school Chilomoni Primary in Blantyre, Malawi. (Photo: Water For People.)



Lennie, now 20 years of age and a university student, with her friends. (Photo: Water For People.)



Everyone Forever means reliable and lasting water and sanitation services for every clinic, family, and school. Students at Chilomoni Primary in Blantyre, Malawi. (Photo: Water For People.)

water for people

THE GLOBAL WATER AND SANITATION CRISIS

Over 2.2 billion people lack access to safe water and 3.5 billion lack access to decent toilets.

While the world is behind in addressing this crisis, Water For People is actively changing this number.

With teams across the globe, we're driving lasting access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services that are resilient in the face of climate change, equitable to all, and bring health and prosperity to communities.

We focus locally on reaching every household, health clinic, and school in the areas where we work – for Everyone Forever.

However, the need to collaborate and expand further is critical. That's why we're also working on elevating community-level experiences and learnings to national and global conversations.

Water and sanitation access for everyone is possible. Join us.







Climate

Climate change affects water and sanitation access for people worldwide through more devastating weather events and the associated floods, droughts, storms, and landslides. We're building resilience so communities and their water sources survive climate change.

Health

No one should die from a preventable disease. And yet, 1.4 million deaths could be prevented each year with safe water, sanitation, and hygiene access. Protecting water sources, safely managing human waste, reaching hospitals with reliable water access, and hygiene training in schools and communities all contribute to saving lives.

Gender Equity

Globally, women and girls are responsible for water collection in 7 out of 10 households without water at their home. Water For People promotes equity and opportunity through menstrual hygiene education in schools, bringing women's voices into the design and operation of water systems, and ensuring access to the dignity and privacy of bathrooms.

Economic Development

Water For People's entrepreneurial trainings enhance the work of pump mechanics, water sellers, pit latrine emptiers, and hardware shop owners around the world. Their businesses now contribute to the sustainability and longevity of water and sanitation services in their communities and establish economic stability for their families.

VISION

A world where every person has access to reliable and safe water and sanitation services.

MISSION

Water For People exists to promote the development of high-quality drinking water and sanitation services, accessible to all, and sustained by strong communities, businesses, and governments.

Learn more at **waterforpeople.org**

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Water Sector Organizations Partner on Innovative Generative AI Research Project

On January 15, the AWWA, in collaboration with the Water Environment Federation (WEF), The Water Research Foundation (WRF), and Karmous Edwards Consulting (KEC), launched a project on the Role of Generative AI (GenAI) for the Global Water Sector.

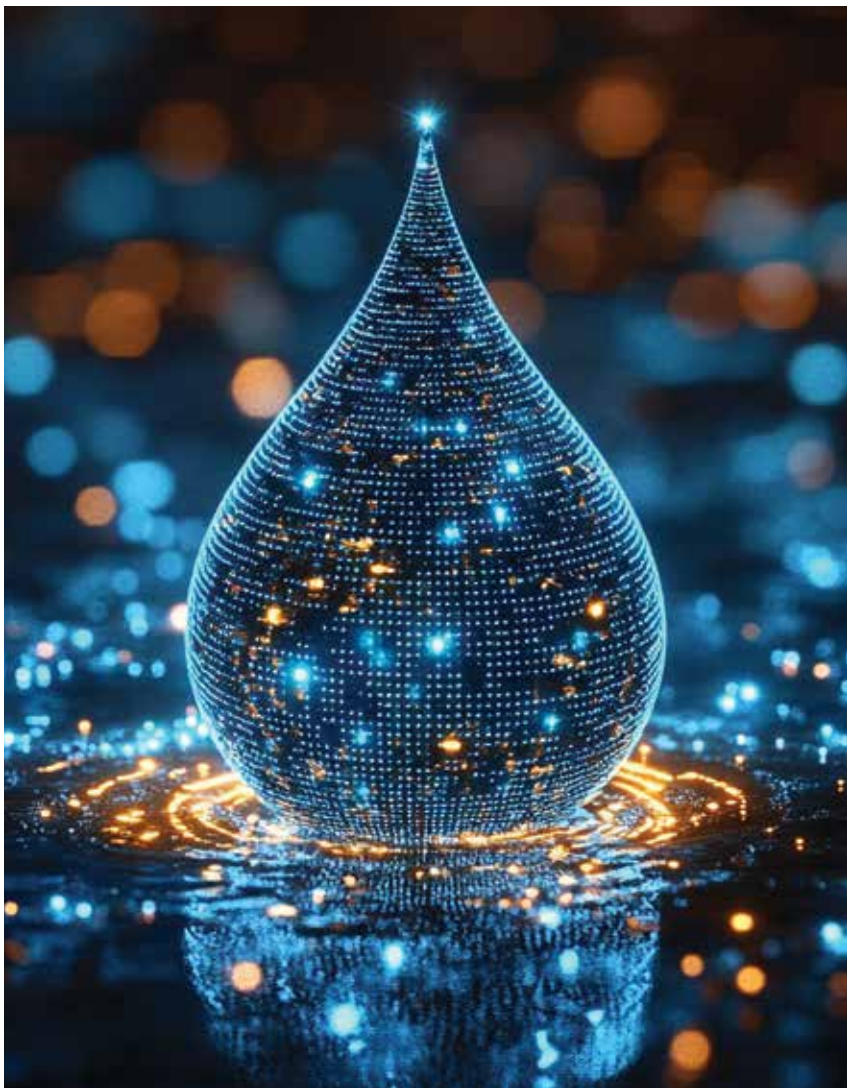
The research will establish a foundational understanding of GenAI's role for water utilities, develop and share best practices and case studies for GenAI applications in water, and establish a research roadmap for advancing future applications of this innovative technology in the water sector.

"Generative AI is a game changer that will transform the water community in ways we cannot yet fully imagine," said David LaFrance, AWWA CEO. "The amazing members of the project team will lay the foundation to bring unimagined possibilities into our daily strategic operations. AWWA is proud to be part of this ground-breaking exploration."

Working with a diverse group of global water utilities – including utilities from South Korea and the UK – under the technical leadership of KEC, the project will explore the application of GenAI to address critical water sector challenges, such as infrastructure management, water resource and environmental resilience, and public engagement and understanding of the value of water.

"While digital transformation of the water sector has been underway for several years, the emergence of GenAI technologies represents a significant opportunity to further transform the water sector by providing powerful, accessible solutions for utilities of all sizes," said Ralph Exton, WEF Executive Director.

The ability of GenAI to analyze and generate insights from vast datasets – both structured and unstructured – can help utilities uncover trends, optimize resource allocation, and support data-driven decision-making at all levels and in all roles. Significantly, GenAI has the potential to augment human resources rather than replace them, enabling water sector professionals to focus on higher-value tasks, make more informed decisions, and drive innovation.



"Together, we aim to leverage the cost-effective yet sophisticated capabilities of generative AI to enhance utility operations, bridge the digital divide among utilities of all sizes, and establish a research roadmap that will propel global digital transformation in the water sector," said Gigi Karmous-Edwards, Principal of KEC.

Project outcomes will serve to define new approaches to leverage GenAI technologies, mitigate risks and advance digital transformation in water to enhance utility capacity to address current and future water challenges.

"This exciting project will gather insights and lessons learned from utilities who already have experience implementing GenAI strategies," said Dr. Peter Grevatt, WRF CEO. "These case studies will help others across the water sector see the potential associated with the use of these new tools, while demonstrating how to pursue secure experimentation, thereby mitigating the cybersecurity concerns sometimes associated with GenAI."

Project results will be available in late 2025. Visit *www.waterrf.org/research/projects/role-generative-ai-genai-global-water-sector* for updates on project progress.

AWWA Extends Support for Bipartisan Introduction of *Water Systems PFAS Liability Protection Act*

On February 12, Reps. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D-WA) and Celeste Maloy (R-UT) introduced bipartisan legislation to advance "polluter pays" principle for PFAS

The AWWA, as a member of the Water Coalition Against PFAS, announced its support for the reintroduction of the *Water Systems PFAS Liability Protection Act.* According to the Association, this bipartisan legislation would provide statutory liability protections for water utilities under the *Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act* (CERCLA) for per and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), ensuring that polluters, not the public, pay for PFAS cleanup.

In 2024, the US Environment Protection Agency (EPA) formally designated two of the most common PFAS – perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) – as hazardous substances under CERCLA. This puts drinking water and wastewater utilities at risk of being forced to pay a portion of environmental cleanup costs after they legally dispose of water treatment byproducts or biosolids containing the contaminants – and allowing polluters to avoid their own responsibilities. The *Water Systems PFAS Liability Protection Act* would simply protect innocent water systems from CERCLA liability when they follow all applicable laws for disposing PFAS.

The *Water Systems PFAS Liability Protection Act* of 2025 is identical to bipartisan legislation introduced in the 118th Congress by now-Senator John Curtis (R-Utah).

"The *Water Systems PFAS Liability Protection Act* will ensure that polluters are held responsible for cleaning up the PFAS they introduced into the environment, rather than water utilities and their ratepayers," said David LaFrance, AWWA CEO. "Introducing this legislation is an important first step toward protecting local communities from having to shoulder the significant financial burden of cleaning up PFAS contamination they did not cause. AWWA looks forward to working with Reps. Gluesenkamp Perez and Maloy to advance this bill, and we urge Congress to support it."

Without this legislation, EPA's designation of PFAS as hazardous substances under CERCLA would expose drinking water and wastewater utilities to litigation from the manufacturers of PFAS, who can unjustly include water systems as defendants in litigation to reduce their own clean-up costs. This legal loophole could increase costs on water utilities even further – costs that utilities are then forced to pass along to ratepayers. The *Water Systems PFAS Liability Protection Act* will protect water systems and their customers from the increased costs associated with litigation and potential settlements against PFAS manufacturers and users. AWWA statement on LCRI petition.

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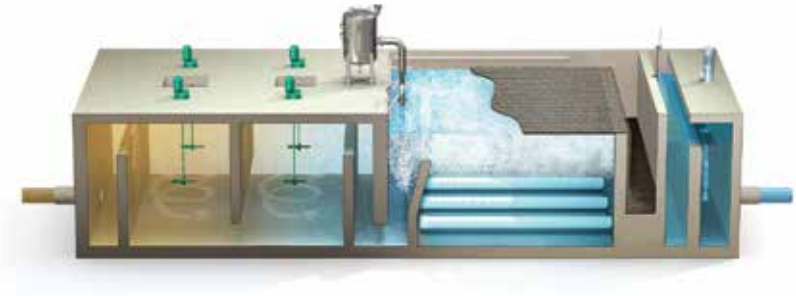
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