

# Regulatory Update

By Richard Mest

The latest on WQA's efforts at the state & federal levels

The water quality improvement industry has faced both challenges and opportunities in the governmental arena in 2014. Through tireless government relation efforts, the Water Quality Assn. (WQA) has worked to protect the interests of its member companies by identifying key policymakers across the country and educating them on critical issues facing the industry.

WQA's Government Affairs Department advocates on behalf of the water quality improvement industry at the federal, state and local levels. It works closely with policymakers and regulators to educate them on the benefits of water treatment, striving to improve the business climate for the industry by reducing regulatory burdens and increasing market opportunities. The following are some of the key areas

of WQA's work as of Sept. 1, 2014.

## California

In January 2014, California Gov. Jerry Brown declared a state of emergency due to drought conditions, directing the state's Department of Water Resources and Water Resources Control Board to investigate the drought's effect on fish and wildlife.

In March, Brown allocated \$10 million of the state's funds toward water efficiency initiatives for on-form water conservation programs.

The following month, the Water Resources Control Board approved \$4 million to provide interim replacement drinking water for economically disadvantaged communities with

contaminated water supplies. This crisis, while unfortunate, may present business opportunities for the companies WQA represents. The issue will be monitored closely by the association and its members.

The other big change in California this year is the transfer of the drinking water program from the state's Department of Public Health to its Water Resources Control Board. Brown entered this change into the version of the budget he submitted to the legislature, and it is expected to be signed into law sometime in October.

WQA and Pacific Water Quality Assn. representatives also have worked with California Assemblymen Luis Alejo and Brian Dahle on two pieces of legislation to improve the acceptance of point-of-use (POU) and point-of-entry (POE) water treatment technology. One bill would increase the number of permitted service connections that may use POU/POE technology from 200 to 500. The other would compel the California government to fund up to four pilot programs that would bring POU/POE technology to disadvantaged communities and report back on their success. Both of these bills were not taken up by the California State Senate, so they will not go anywhere in 2014.

## Arizona

The state of Arizona is facing not only drought, but also salinity problems. The majority of the state's water salinity results from naturally occurring sources, such as the Colorado River, and from agricultural runoff. WQA and Arizona Water Quality Assn. representatives have been working closely with state officials on these issues for several years.

Earlier this year, the Arizona



Drought and salinity problems in California and Arizona have WQA representatives working with state officials to encourage new legislation and public outreach.

WQA secured a grant from the state to develop an educational campaign surrounding water salinity issues. WQA and the Arizona WQA will be teaming up to create the materials, which will include separate components targeting water treatment professionals and the general public. The public outreach campaign will inform consumers about how they can reduce water salinity in their homes. The program for industry members will provide some salinity-minded best practices for installing water treatment devices.

### Wisconsin



WQA's Government Relations Department is making major strides in several key areas in the state of Wisconsin. The association is working to streamline the licensing requirements for water treatment equipment installers while also collaborating with the office of Gov. Scott Walker on improving the state's process for certifying water treatment products.

### Delaware



WQA and the Eastern Water Quality Assn. (EWQA) are working to change Delaware's regulation prohibiting water softeners from discharging into septic systems. WQA and EWQA have had several meetings, hearings and workshops with the state's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control on this issue.

### Leveraging Data

Data yielded by Water Quality Research Foundation (WQRF) studies play a pivotal role in supporting the industry's government relations, regulatory advocacy and consumer outreach efforts. The foundation is currently in the midst of a capital campaign to raise \$2.5 million over the course of five years. To learn more about the Investing in Your Future campaign, visit [www.wqrf.org](http://www.wqrf.org) or contact Tyler Eble, WQRF campaign director, at [foundation@wqrf.org](mailto:foundation@wqrf.org) or 630.742.2399.

### Federal Outreach

WQA will continue to build upon its outreach efforts in Washington, D.C. Last year, several WQA members and senior WQA staff spent time on Capitol Hill meeting with key members of Congress.

WQA is currently working on a coordinated strategy to increase its presence at the federal and state levels to promote the viability of its members and their services, products and science as real solutions at affordable costs.

WQA also is monitoring a trend

in recent news reports indicating that the current administration may bypass Congress, pushing through more executive orders, to grant more authority to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2015. *wqp*

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