The Water Quality Association is working with states issuing Shelter-in-Place orders. We have been assured, broadly, water treatment products and services fit within the category of essential services designated by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) which are allowed to remain open for business, safeguarding America’s drinking water.

In February 2020, EPA announced it is proposing to regulate both PFOS and PFOA under the Safe Drinking Water Act—a critical step as the agency continues its efforts to protect drinking water and public health nationwide. This preliminary determination is a step toward providing key information about PFOA and PFOS in drinking water.

The proposed rule will identify the most at-risk communities and ensure systems have plans in place to rapidly respond by taking action to reduce elevated levels of lead in drinking water. The agency’s proposal takes a proactive and holistic approach to improve the current rule—from testing to treatment to telling the public about the levels and proposed revisions to the Lead and Copper Rule.

The WQA-PAC informs supporters on future government activities that will demand attention. PAC supporters lead by carrying the industry’s mission and vision to Washington, D.C. and inspire Congress to strive for safe drinking water.
COVID-19: Advocacy Alert

WQA Government Affairs team is working with States issuing Shelter-in-Place directives. We have been assured that, broadly, water treatment products and services are within the essential services category as designated by the Department of Homeland Security. We have been in touch with officials in Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin. WQA has posted an open letter emphasizing that members’ products and services are “essential” to safeguarding drinking water.

COVID-19: Legislation Tracker

A supplemental page has been added to WQA’s Coronavirus website to provide government updates. Multiple federal bills addressing COVID-19 are being debated and signed into law. WQA and Gephardt Government Affairs are staying on top of these activities and updating the page with current information as it is released by the government. COVID-19 proposed and passed legislation will also be included in the WQA monthly bills list.

COVID-19: Small Business Administration Disaster Loans

The Small Business Administration is now authorized to provide small business disaster assistance loans for economic injury from COVID-19. This program offers up to $2 million in assistance and can provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing. These loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can’t be paid because of a disaster impact.

LIVE: EPA Meets with WQA Members

Throughout 2019 and into 2020 WQA members have met with the EPA. Having visited the agency in DC with the EPA Administrator, Andrew Wheeler and visited the EPA Cincinnati Laboratory. During the Water Resources Congressional Summit, all participants met with David Ross, Assistant Administrator of EPA’s Office of Water. This continued relationship has allowed both groups to learn from each other and share POU and POE solutions. Follow-up meetings and events are scheduled to continue the productive dialogue.
UPCOMING: Lead and Copper Revisions Proposal Update

During the WQA DC Fly-In, David Ross, with the EPA, reiterated point-of-use and point-of-entry technologies having a part to play in remediation of lead in drinking water. WQA set up a webpage on the Lead and Copper Rule revisions to encourage members to submit public comments. Now the comment period has ended and the EPA is working on addressing those comments. The tentative thought is the EPA will have another update in the summer 2020.

UPCOMING: PFAS Regulatory Determination Next Steps

During the WQA DC Fly-In, David Ross also discussed the agency’s PFAS Action Plan. The most recent update being the decision to move forward with regulatory determination to regulate PFOS and PFOA in drinking water. Before beginning the process to establish a national primary drinking water regulation, the EPA will be sending a request for information and data on other PFAS substances, as well as, seeking comments on potential monitoring requirements and regulatory approaches.

Presidential Election Year

Coverage of the top race coupled with members of the House of Representatives and a third of the Senate also seeking reelection, a different dynamic forms in Washington, DC. Members are beginning to focus on reelection and national attention on COVID-19. WQA’s Government Affairs team and Gephardt Group are working with federal agencies and strengthening coalitions with allied groups to be proactive going into the post-election session.

Provisions on Drinking Water

During the Water Resources Congressional Summit, WQA’s DC Fly-In, members were advocating for legislation which addresses households or buildings serviced by private wells that includes mandates to consider all available technology solutions including POU/POE. Likewise, legislation addressing public water system treatment upgrades should include the consideration of all available technology solutions including POU/POE. WQA’s Government Affairs team and Gephardt Group are continuing to work with legislators and federal agencies on these provisions and are building a coalition of support.
Thank you to our members who are actively participating in our political dialogue through the WQA-PAC:

Bret Tangley—Sterling Water, Inc. ★ PAC Ambassador 2020
Mike Mecca—Performance Water Products ★ PAC Ambassador 2020
Richard Mest—Master Water Conditioning
Chris Wilker—EcoWater Systems
Kurt Gruett—Water-Right
Larry Gottlieb—ResinTech
DJ Shannahan—Sharp Water Culligan
Tom Harrington—DS Services of America
Don McGhee—Hydro Systems

Thank you to Bret Tangley and Mike Mecca for promoting WQA-PACs mission to association members. To become a PAC Ambassador contact Kathleen Burbidge at kburbridge@wqa.org or 630-505-0609.
Over 35 WQA members came to Washington, DC for Water Resources Congressional Summit, WQA’s two-day annual DC Fly-In. We engaged congressional members and federal agencies in conversations surrounding our industry’s vital role in providing drinking water solutions and services.

We heard from David Ross, Assistant Administrator of EPA’s Office of Water; Representative Paul Tonko; Pete Johnson with Great Lakes Alliance; and a congressional staff panel. WQA members wrapped up the first day meeting with the Honorable Dick Gephardt and having a reception in the House Ways & Means Committee Room.

On the Hill, WQA members were assigned to small teams and had 5-6 meetings with congressional offices. Overall, we met with over 60 offices to share your stories.

We encourage all WQA members to join the fly-in. Every year, the event date is chosen after congress has set its calendar. A save-the-day and registration for the 2021 Fly-In will be posted December 2020.