

Southern California Dialogue

# “California’s Tightening Drinking Water Standards: Small Systems And The Point of No Return”



Adán Ortega, Executive Director  
California Association of Mutual  
Water Companies



# Sky-Rocketing Trend

- Compliance with the regulations has been good among large water systems. However, some small water systems, particularly community PWS serving less than 200 service connections and smaller non-transient, non-community water systems, have had considerably more difficulty complying with the regulations - SWRCB 2015 Safe Drinking Water Plan
- Non-Compliance in 2012: 467 (Arsenic 191, Nitrates 125)  
SWRCB 2015 Safe Drinking Water Plan
- PLUS Non-Compliance with 10ppb Hex Chrom Standard  
2015: 332 - 71% INCREASE - source: ACWA/AWWA cost study 2014
- 105% increase if one compares only Arsenic/Nitrates that affect mostly small systems as does the standard for HexChrom



# Is Water Quality Deteriorating?

- It's really a matter of advances in detection technology and an outdated regulatory framework
- Leaving health officials in a quagmire as the public's perception of risk is warped
- Bankrupting small water systems who can't predict what meeting new regulations will cost
- Cost of treating from parts per-million to parts per-billion to parts per-trillion greater by orders of magnitude



# Options for Reason

- A “Strategic Plan” for Safe Drinking Water
- Focus on availability of technology *for compliance based on affordability - not just cost/benefit analysis*
- Consider a “multi-contaminant” approach so utilities are governed by timelines where remedies (treatment technologies) are “validated” until the final contaminant is up for review
- Stop alarming the public with false notions of risk and engender appreciation for technological advances that will make us all SAFER but probably not healthier



Adán Ortega  
Executive Director  
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[adan@calmutuals.org](mailto:adan@calmutuals.org)

714 449-3397

[www.calmutuals.org](http://www.calmutuals.org)