

Officials Recognize POU Industry



After the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finally announced the new maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 10 parts per billion (ppb) for arsenic, an estimated 4,000 community water systems are now left to take measures to lower their arsenic levels, which were previously at 50 ppb.

The new standard raises concerns including costs, which will pay off for the POU/POE industry. The National Resources Defense

Council estimated that 56 million Americans drink water with unsafe levels of arsenic. The EPA estimates that compliance to the new standard will cost \$200 million. Some small communities serving fewer than 500 people (65 percent) are facing a tripling of water rates that will be passed to the consumer. The EPA plans on providing \$20 million over the next two years for the research and development of more economical technology solutions.¹

Here is where the POU industry finds its place with the new standard. POU is being recognized as acceptable treatment for arsenic removal. According to the Water Quality Association's (WQA) *WQA News*,² the EPA listed POU activated alumina and reverse osmosis technologies as acceptable treatment for use in small systems. The article also stated that the EPA "used POU in its cost calculations in a limited manner, estimating POU applications in approximately 4 to 7 percent of communities with fewer than 500 people. While this is a small use factor, this is the first time the POU option has been identified by the EPA as a viable option for compliance purposes."

Educating the nation's government as well as consumers about the POU industry has been a top priority. A meeting last summer with members of the industry including WQA representatives and senators served as a breakthrough forum among the various organizations to share technologies and their capabilities.

This is a great start for our industry that has gone unrecognized by officials until now. As the arsenic compliance date (2006) grows nearer and stricter standards are passed for other contaminants, the POU industry is going to see growth, and the demand for innovation will become great.

This issue of *WQP* discusses many of these topics including how to position your POE products with the new arsenic standard on page 8, POU market trends on page 18, innovations in activated carbon on page 16 and a WQA Preshow Guide on page 22 that serves as a first look and planning guide for the WQA's must-attend show. Don't miss the arsenic educational sessions throughout the conference. In addition, visit WaterInfoCenter.com for additional and up-to-date arsenic information.

Best Wishes,

Wendi Hope King
 wqpeditor@sgcmail.com
 www.waterinfocenter.com

¹ WaterInfoCenter.com. "EPA Announces Arsenic Standard for Drinking Water of 10 ppb." Nov. 1, 2001.

² Water Quality Association. *WQA News*, November 2001, Vol. 10 Num. 4.

WATER QUALITY PRODUCTS

Scranton Gillette Communications, Inc.
 380 E. Northwest Hwy, #200, Des Plaines, IL 60016-2282
 Telephone 847/298-6622 FAX 847/390-0408

EDITORIAL STAFF

wqpeditor@sgcmail.com

Wendi Hope King Editor
 wking@sgcmail.com

Dan Soltis Associate Editor
 dsoltis@sgcmail.com

Natalie W. Ferguson Copy Editor
 nferguson@sgcmail.com

MANAGEMENT

Ken Hughes Group Publisher
 khughes@sgcmail.com

Adrienne Miller Sales/Marketing Associate
 amiller@sgcmail.com

ADVERTISING SALES

National Sales Office
 Scranton Gillette Communications, Inc.
 380 E. Northwest Hwy, #200, Des Plaines, IL 60016-2282
 Telephone 847/298-6622 FAX 847/390-0408

Don Heidkamp National Sales Manager
 dheidkamp@sgcmail.com 847-391-1047

Pat Barrett Regional Sales Manager
 pbarrett@sgcmail.com 847-391-1051

Donna Aly Classified Ad Sales Manager
 sgclass@aol.com 480-941-0510, ext. 13

ADVERTISING ORDERS

ads@sgcmail.com

Erica Rivera Traffic Coordinator
 erivera@sgcmail.com

MAGAZINE PRODUCTION

sgcproduction@sgcmail.com

Scott Figi Production Manager
 sfigi@sgcmail.com

INTERACTIVE MEDIA GROUP — INTERNET

Hal Gillette Group Publisher
 hgillette@sgcmail.com

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