

From the CWWA President



Streamflow, Streamflow, Streamflow

Although we are kicking off a new year, we expect that CWWA's legislative and regulatory focus in 2010 will look a lot like it did in 2009. If Jan Brady of the infamous Brady Bunch were here, she'd be whining, "Streamflow, streamflow, streamflow. It's always about streamflow!" And she'd be right.

But that's unfortunate because compliance with the state Department of Environmental Protection's streamflow regulations will force us as an industry to shift our attention away from other issues that should be a top priority for public water suppliers and our communities – 1) Infrastructure replacement; 2) Compliance with new water quality standards and 3) Developing sustainable practices.

Unlike Jan Brady, the industry can't put on a kooky wig to get attention for these issues. We have to engage our mayors, first selectman, state legislators and other public officials in a dialogue about the pressures facing

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our industry and the condition of our infrastructure and how we can work together to address these issues. We also need to do a better job of educating our residential and business customers about the cost and challenges involved in providing them with a safe, adequate supply of water to meet their needs.

The good news is that meeting with various stakeholders on the draft streamflow regulations has given us an opportunity to begin this dialogue.

Community leaders and industry groups have been quick to understand the impact of proposed streamflow regulations on customer rates, service, and public water supplies. They have also appreciated the expertise and dedication that we bring to the table in meeting their public water supply needs.

As an association, we are very pleased that our members have stepped up to the challenges posed by the streamflow regulations. We encourage as many of you as possible to testify at the public hearing on the draft streamflow regulations on January 21, 9:00 a.m., DEP, 79 Elm Street, Hartford or to provide written comments to DEP by February 4. You should also communicate your concerns to local and state leaders, customers and business groups in your area and ask them to weigh in on the regulations and how they will impact their community or business.

As they say, "You can't win if you don't play." We cannot win on this issue unless we make a strong showing at the public hearing. In addition, DEP cannot revise the regulations unless specific concerns are raised.

Please contact CWWA's Executive Director, Betsy Gara, at 860-547-0566 or gara@gmlobbying.com and let her know if you will be testifying at the public hearing. If you don't contact her, my guess is that we will be complaining about "streamflow, streamflow, streamflow" for a long time.

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