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Delaware Source Water Assessment Plan Update

As many are aware, most State Source Water Assessment Plans were approved by U.S. EPA in late 1999/early 2000. As such, those documents are approximately twenty years old now and showing their age. When Delaware's Plan was approved in 1999 we believed that it adequately and uniquely evaluated Delaware's public drinking water sources utilizing data that was easy to compile due to our small stature (compared to other States in the region/Nation).

As Delaware began implementing our Plan it soon became apparent that it had some minor flaws in it that were not anticipated. The one flaw that we received the most comments from water suppliers on was related to the susceptibility of a source to metals if they exceeded 50% of the SMCL (or had a SMCL exceedence) to iron, manganese, or sodium. Depending upon the vulnerability of the source, that water system could immediately have a susceptibility rating of High or Very High to our Metals category. Iron and manganese are naturally occurring in many of our Atlantic Coastal Plain aquifers and the sodium could be either from natural or man-made sources. The concern was that a high susceptibility to metals conjures an assumption that the contamination is from more concerning elements such as Arsenic, Cadmium, Cobalt, or Mercury. Similarly, we had issues with how to handle radionuclides and unregulated contaminants. Those were not specifically addressed in our 1999 SWAP.

Realizing that our Plan was approaching 20-years since publication, the Delaware SWAPP, with support of our Citizen and Technical Advisory Committee (CTAC), assembled a subcommittee to review the Plan in August of 2018. Since then the Subcommittee has been conducting monthly public meetings to review every aspect of the document to see where changes can and need to be made. To date, the Subcommittee has made recommendations on:

- Updating the Contaminants of Interest Table used by the Program;
- Evaluating the list of discrete point sites used in our contaminant inventory review
 - GIS data for some programs not updated since 1999/2000;
 - Decide whether to cull datasets that are older and potentially inaccurate;
 - Evaluate the need for new datasets such as Stormwater facilities and cemeteries
- Adding the potential for discussion of source susceptibility to Flooding, Salt Water Intrusion, and Sea Level Rise into the Assessment report;
- Use a multi-tiered (iterative) susceptibility analysis of available (raw) water quality data; and
- Utilizing ESRI Story Maps as a vehicle for public dissemination of source water assessments versus a report that may get read by a few people.

Delaware anticipates submitting their revised SWAP to EPA for review in early 2020.