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The Authoritative Resource on Safe Water®

NewsRelease

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Communities urge protection of precious source water during Drinking Water Week

(DENVER) May 8, 2009 – As Drinking Water Week 2009 concludes, the American Water Works Association (AWWA) joins water professionals across North America in encouraging the protection of our precious source waters.

In the past year, media reports about trace amounts of pharmaceutical compounds and personal care products in drinking water have underscored the connection between what is released into the environment and what finds its way to our source water.

“We all have a role in protecting our water resources,” said Mike Leonard, AWWA president. “Elected leaders can work for smart public policy that protects source water. Agriculture operations and industry can take steps to reduce pollution in our waterways and aquifers. And we as consumers can properly dispose of prescription medications and other products that are too often flushed into the wastewater system and out to the environment.”

As analytical methods improve, compounds from pharmaceuticals and personal care products are being found in drinking water at very low levels. While science has not found human health impacts these levels, researchers are continuing study the occurrence, removal techniques and possible health impacts of these emerging contaminants.

“What matters most is not if we can find these substances – it’s the health impacts at the levels we find them,” Leonard said. “It’s very important that we study not only what is there, but rather what it means.”

On April 23, the National Water Research and Development Initiative Act of 2009 passed the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill, which aims to coordinate U.S. research efforts to ensure adequate water supplies, also includes language that requires a study of

human health impacts associated with pharmaceuticals and personal care products and other emerging contaminants.

About Drinking Water Week

A safe, reliable water supply is critical to the success of any community. It creates jobs, attracts industry and investment, and provides for the health and welfare of citizens in ways ranging from disease prevention to fire suppression. For more than 30 years, the American Water Works Association and its members have celebrated Drinking Water Week – a unique opportunity for both water professionals and the communities they serve to join together to recognize the vital role water plays in our daily lives.

Established in 1881, AWWA is the oldest and largest nonprofit, scientific and educational organization dedicated to safe water in North America. AWWA has more than 60,000 members worldwide and its 4,500 utility members serve 80 percent of the U.S. population.

For more information on what only tap water delivers, please visit www.drinktap.org.

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AWWA is the authoritative resource for knowledge, information, and advocacy to improve the quality and supply of water in North America and beyond. AWWA is the largest organization of water professionals in the world. AWWA advances public health, safety and welfare by uniting the efforts of the full spectrum of the entire water community. Through our collective strength we become better stewards of water for the greatest good of the people and the environment.