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The Authoritative Resource on Safe Water®

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Statement from American Water Works Association on the Environmental Working Group's report on Tap Water Quality Testing and Violations

WASHINGTON – *On December 12, 2009, the Environmental Working Group (EWG) will launch an online, interactive database on tap water quality. The data has been compiled from state environment and health agencies. Tom Curtis, deputy executive director of AWWA, issued the following statement concerning the database.*

“Water professionals nationwide share Environmental Working Group’s (EWG) interest in protecting our precious water sources and assuring safe water at the tap.

“Americans can celebrate that the quality of drinking water in the United States is better than ever. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reports that approximately 92 percent of water systems met all health-based standards under the Safe Drinking Water Act in 2008. Those standards are more protective than at any time in our nation’s history.

“Still, there is work to be done. More than 96 percent of health-based Safe Drinking Water Act violations occur at small utilities with fewer than 10,000 customers. These utilities often struggle with the expense of upgrading facilities to meet new regulations. The large expense of installing new treatment is borne by the small populations in these communities. The government could help by creating a federal water infrastructure bank that provides low-interest loans to communities needing to improve their systems.

“EPA has a systematic approach to determining which substances are regulated. Those regulations take into account occurrence data and health effects research and should reflect the best available science. Water suppliers support strong regulations that protect public health, and they also support proactive research that identifies and examines new substances found in source waters.

“Tap water consumers need not wait for news reports to know the quality of their water. Every year, utilities mail each customer a consumer confidence report that includes detailed information on water quality, including any violations of health protective standards under the Safe Drinking Water Act. Additional information is typically available on web sites or by simply by calling the utility.

“It’s important to keep in mind that the first and most effective way to prevent contamination of drinking water is to protect our precious water sources. We should all work for public policy that protects surface and groundwater from contamination, long before that water gets to a community’s utility. “

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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 water community. Through our collective strength we become better stewards of water for the greatest good of the people and the environment.