

**Re: Water Quality and Contamination Public Hearing**

**Date: Wednesday, September 7, 2016**

**Location: Albany, NY – Hearing Room B, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Legislative Office Building**

**Testimony by: Martin J. Aman on behalf of the New York Section American Water Works Association**

Good afternoon, I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to present testimony today on water contamination and water quality issues facing New York water suppliers. My name is Marty Aman and I am the Executive Director of the Wayne County Water and Sewer Authority, a water and wastewater utility serving over 40,000 residents in Wayne County. I also currently serve as the Chair of the New York Section of the American Water Works Association. I am here today representing the New York Section AWWA and PUBLIC water suppliers throughout the State of New York.

The New York Section AWWA is a State Section of the American Water Works Association, with total Association membership of approximately 52,000 in the US and throughout the world. The members of the American Water Works Association are water utilities and water professionals that represent public water systems that serve over 200 million people in the US with safe drinking water. The New York Section AWWA has over 1,800 members consisting of water professionals responsible for the supply of safe drinking water to over 15 million people in New York State through public water supplies.

The New York Section AWWA is a non-profit organization founded over 100 years ago, that serves to provide education, training and advocacy for public water supplies in New York State. Our mission is to lead the water community to provide sustainable safe water through the advancement of management, education, science, and technology. Over our 100 plus year history, members of AWWA and the New York Section have furthered the science of safe drinking water, water supply protection and water treatment technologies for the benefit of public health protection to drinking water consumers. Some of the most significant advances in public health protection have been developed by AWWA members, including chlorination and filtration of drinking water.

Recent events have heightened awareness of the value of drinking water professionals and regulatory agencies in the protection of public health. Recent events in Flint, MI, and here in New York State in Hoosick Falls, Petersburg and Newburgh; have reinforced a continued need for diligence, proper regulatory oversight, and transparency in the public water supply field. In spite of this, the fact remains that the vast majority of public water suppliers are providing high quality drinking water to their customers and are complying with monitoring and treatment requirements for currently regulated contaminants, and are routinely reporting this information to the public. The Federal Safe Drinking Water Act and its Amendments of 1986 and 1996, as adopted by the New York State Department of Health (DOH) have significantly improved the quality of our supplies, particularly with respect to waterborne pathogens, organics, disinfection byproducts and lead. The Federal Clean Water Act and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) adoption of these regulations have considerably improved the protection of our source waters from contamination.

In many cases, the contaminants that are monitored and treated for in drinking water are not due to public water supplier issues, they are rather due to legacy contamination issues in our watersheds, typically beyond the control of the water supplier. Most of the cost of this monitoring and treatment is borne by the customers of public water supply systems, even though their supplier is not the cause of this expense.

The New York Section AWWA has historically worked cooperatively with the New York State DOH and New York State DEC in furthering goals for enhanced public health protection related to public drinking water. Our members, in conjunction with representatives from Department of Health and Department of Environmental Conservation, continue to work together on issues that have enhanced the quality of our supplies, improved protection of our watersheds, and better assured the overall protection of public health from contamination. Recently, we enhanced our efforts to work with New York State DOH by coordinating a meeting in Albany, NY. Ultimately, we are working toward a common goal of improving communication and coordination between our organizations in an effort to better protect our state drinking water supplies and overall public health.

We are here today to reinforce our commitment of cooperation, and offer this committee, the Governor's Water Quality Rapid Response Team, and the State regulatory agencies, our considerable expertise in protecting drinking water quality.

We understand the current resource limitations of the State in protecting over 2,800 community water systems and several thousand non-community water systems throughout New York. Many public water suppliers have made considerable investments in their systems to comply with regulations to protect public health. Additional resources are now needed to better identify, characterize, and remediate any contamination that quietly threatens water supplies, before said contamination becomes a public health threat and a significant cost to the drinking water public. In addition, water suppliers are faced with funding the replacement of a deteriorating infrastructure, planning for the replacement of an aging workforce, adjusting to the effects of climate change, and other factors that cry out for more resources.

We strongly encourage our legislative leaders in New York State to also support additional funding and resources to help ensure that the New York State Departments of Health and Environmental Conservation will be properly staffed and supported as we work together to meet the challenges at hand.

The New York Section AWWA appreciates the opportunity to present our testimony today, and hope that that our offer of assistance and request for resources is seriously considered by this Committee and the State.

Respectfully submitted,  
Martin J. Aman  
Chair, NYSAWWA