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The Impact of Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals on Freshwater Supplies: CWA and SDWA Revisited

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THE IMPACT OF ENDOCRINE DISRUPTING CHEMICALS ON FRESHWATER SUPPLIES: CWA AND SDWA REVISITED

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The problem of increasing freshwater supplies is the west is not only a matter of water quantity it is also a problem of water quality and failures in the existing regulatory scheme. A case in point is the contamination of surface waters with endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) from wastewater treatment plant effluents.

Conventional drinking water treatment and wastewater treatment plants are not effective at removing EDCs. Studies show wastewater effluent contains synthetic hormones and other potential EDCs. Because many water treatment plants treat surface water that receives wastewater effluent, EDCs come full circle back into drinking water. Unfortunately, very few community water systems employ membrane treatment or activated carbon leaving the majority of the public at risk for consumption of EDCs through their drinking water.

Currently Congress appropriates only a tenth of the funding required to assist states in meeting existing water and wastewater infrastructure needs. The lack of Congressional support for funding water and wastewater infrastructure projects is indicative of the lack of traction and prescience of the issue at the federal level and ignores the concern expressed by the public. Regulatory reforms are required both the appropriate funds for water and wastewater infrastructure but also to require treatment for removal of EDCs as a chemical class.

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