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Kentucky's Drinking Water Continues Excellence in Quality, Reliability, Annual Report Shows

Decrease in health-based violations result from technical assistance and cooperation

FRANKFORT, Ky. (June 28, 2018) - Data presented in Kentucky's 2017 Annual Drinking Water Report show that the state's 435 public water systems reliably produced excellent quality water in 2017 with a marked decrease in violations. The report summarizes the compliance data for public water systems including health-based and administrative violations.

The Annual Drinking Water Report is required by the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, and it lists notices of violation issued to public water systems within the previous calendar year. Most violations recorded are administrative in nature, reflecting issues with monitoring and reporting. Health-based violations are issued when water that is produced by a water system exceeds the established limits for

a regulated contaminant. Kentucky's public water systems have shown significant improvement with decreases in both health-based violations and monitoring and reporting violations in 2017.

The federal Safe Drinking Water Act rules and state regulations require Kentucky's public water systems to regularly test produced water for more than 100 contaminants such as bacteria, nitrates and other chemicals. The Kentucky Division of Water (DOW) reviews the analytical results and reports to determine whether or not water systems are in compliance with state and federal drinking water regulations. Notices of violation are issued to water systems when contaminants are measured at concentrations above established limits or when reporting requirements are not met. These notices require water systems to take action to correct the violation and notify customers of the violation.

Historical data trends in previous years showed a decrease in the number of health-based violations until 2013. The number of health-based violations at public water systems increased sharply in 2014 due to the implementation of new federal requirements for increased monitoring for disinfection byproducts (DBPs). Disinfection byproducts are a class of contaminants that result from the interaction of disinfection chemicals such as chlorine with other chemicals in the water. Violations related to DPBs constituted 95% of all health-based drinking water violations in 2017, while a small number of other violations make up the balance of reported health-based violations.

Although violations for DBPs caused the number of health-based violations to climb in 2014 through 2016, through increased industry experience, training, and targeted technical assistance, that trend was reversed in 2017. The current report shows that health-based violations in Kentucky have decreased by 25%, from 226 in 2016 to 173 violations in 2017. Monitoring and reporting violations have likewise, decreased by 51% in 2017. The 175 health-based violations health-based violations constitute only 0.21 percent of more than 82,000 test results evaluated each year; meaning that greater

than 99.7% of all analytical results submitted were compliant with the state and federal regulations.

The reduction in health-based violations reflects a statewide effort put forth by public water systems, the Division of Water, and the Kentucky Rural Water Association (KRWA) to increase compliance with the Disinfection Byproduct Rule. “Once a Notice of Violation is issued, the water systems adjust their treatment and distribution processes, if necessary, and submit requested documentation. The Division of Water provides targeted technical assistance and initiates enforcement actions for water systems that fail to return to compliance. Through diligence in these areas we are seeing an increase in compliance with regulations,” said Sarah Jon Gaddis, Manager of the Compliance and Technical Assistance Branch.

The reported 2017 drinking water data shows that none of Kentucky’s 435 public drinking water systems exceeded federally established limits for metals, including lead, or cancer-causing volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

“This report illustrates that Kentucky public water systems, which serve more than 95 percent of Kentuckians, reliably provide high-quality drinking water to our citizens,” said Peter Goodmann, Director of the Division of Water. “Given all the challenges faced by public water systems, this record of compliance is admirable. However, we know that challenges remain in some areas and more work can be done so every water system meets the needs of its customers.”

The report is online at

<http://water.ky.gov/DrinkingWater/Pages/AnnualComplianceReports.aspx>

For more information about the report, contact Sarah Jon Gaddis (502-782-6953).

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