

Environmental Law Seminar - Drinking Water Class

Reading Assignments

1. Read “EPA - Understanding the Safe Drinking Water Act” (fact sheet)
2. Skim “Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA): A Summary of the Act and its Major Requirements” (Congressional Research Service Report)
3. Read “Lead in Flint, Michigan’s Drinking Water: Federal Regulatory Role” (Congressional Research Service)
4. Read “Lead-Laced Water in Flint: A Step-By-Step Look at the Makings of a Crisis” (NPR)
5. Read “What’s in Your Water - Flint and Beyond: Executive Summary” (NRDC)
6. Read pages 1, 2, and 6-9 of “Flint Water Advisory Task Force: Final Report”

Questions to Consider for Class

1. Where does your drinking water come from and what happens to it before it gets to your home?
2. Is the Safe Drinking Water Act an example of command and control regulation or economic incentives?
3. What are primary drinking water standards? Who sets them? Upon what basis?
4. Who enforces the drinking water standards? Are there permits?
5. What are the major provisions of the Safe Drinking Water Act, other than the primary drinking water standards?
6. What agencies were involved in delivering and regulating the drinking water for Flint, Michigan? What role did each agency play?
7. Why does EPA regulate lead? What is the Lead and Copper Rule? What is corrosion control?
8. What action triggered the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan? How did the state of Michigan respond?

9. What role did the City, State, and EPA play in causing or exacerbating the crisis in Flint?
10. Is the situation in Flint an example of environmental injustice? Why or why not?
11. Is Flint an isolated incident or the tip of the iceberg? If there is a larger problem, what can be done to avoid future drinking water contamination events like Flint?