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The Authoritative Resource on Safe Water®

Utility Advisory

To: AWWA Utility Members

From: AWWA Public Affairs

Date: December 3, 2008

Who:	United States Geological Survey
What:	Data release of organic compounds found in water used for public supply
When:	December 5, 2008

This Friday, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) will release the results of its 2003-2005 monitoring study examining a broad range of organic compounds **in source and finished water** at nine drinking water plants across the country. Of these nine sites, only one – the Washington Aqueduct site on the Potomac River – will be specifically named. The other eight sites will not be named because of USGS homeland security efforts and protocols.

The study was a part of the National Water-Quality Assessment (NAWQA) Program of the USGS and characterized the occurrence of 277 organic compounds in the drinking water supply to better understand their sources. These compounds represent many different sources and uses, and include pesticides, fuel hydrocarbons, personal care products, and solvents. Eighty-five, or roughly one-third, of the compounds were detected in at least one source-water sample. Conversely, 192 compounds were not detected in any sample. USGS places the monitoring results in context through the use of Health-Based Screening Levels. **Importantly, USGS categorizes the potential adverse effects to human health as negligible.**

The analytical methods used in this study have low detection levels - often 100 to 1,000 times lower than State and Federal standards and guidelines for protecting water quality. Detections, therefore, do not necessarily indicate a concern to human health. However, this report's release may still generate media inquiries regarding source water pollution for AWWA member utilities.

AWWA's Public Affairs Office is also available to assist with questions from utilities or media and to provide additional information. Please contact Greg Kail at 303-734-3410 or gkail@awwa.org or Deirdre Mueller, dmueller@awwa.org at 303-347-6140.

More information about the data release or NAWQA program can be found at: <http://water.usgs.gov/nawqa/>.

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