



For Immediate release
May 3, 2019

Contact: Bonnifer Ballard, Executive Director
517-292-2912, bballard@mi-water.org

Drinking water affordability, cost for upgrades concern all communities

Protecting drinking water sources and keeping the cost of providing safe drinking water affordable are key concerns for **National Drinking Water Week May 5-11**, says **Michigan Section/ American Water Works Association (MI/AWWA)**.

Each year, local water service providers recognize Drinking Water Week by reminding the public about their role in keeping drinking water safe, protecting source waters and supporting essential upgrades to municipal treatment and distribution systems.

“Protecting our water supply from contamination, including from chemicals such as PFAS to bacteria from tainted groundwater, affects all of us in Michigan,” says **Bonnifer Ballard**, MI-AWWA executive director. “Every homeowner, renter and business relies on safe, affordable water and everyone has a responsibility for protecting our water sources. Single actions make a significant difference in how communities preserve their water resources.”

More than 7 million Michigan residents receive water service from 1,425 community water systems, with water from aquifers, lakes and rivers. Homeowners and businesses can help protect local water sources by:

- Not pouring paint, used oil, chemical cleaners and similar household items down the drain;
- Lessening storm water runoff, which often contains contaminants, by using gravel, paver stones, wood or other porous materials on properties whenever possible;
- Disposing of chemicals and cleaners properly: Never put them down a drain or dump them on the ground. Take advantage of municipal hazardous waste collection days to discard items safely;
- Fixing leaking pipes, faucets and toilets in businesses and homes to eliminate water waste;
- Not flushing non-degradable products, such as baby wipes or feminine hygiene products, in the toilet;

- Scooping up pet waste from yards before bacteria-laden material can run into storm drains and water sources;
- Using native plants in landscaping projects, as they tend to need less fertilizer and water to grow than non-native plants. For grass, varieties that suit that climate help reduce the need for chemicals and extra water.

While many Michigan residents and businesses may pay less than \$1 a day on average for water on demand, cost to provide that resource will rise as infrastructure needs require upgrades.

“The cost to keep municipal water systems updated requires annual investments in every community,” says Ballard. “Deferring the upgrades also has a cost, in water-waste and potential delivery delays to homes and industry. Many water systems are exceeding their expected life spans at 50 years old or older.”

Current spending by local, state and federal sources fund only about one-third of the upgrade needs for all U.S. water systems.

Aging and damaged water pipes cause the loss of 1.7 trillion gallons of drinking water every year. The American Society of Civil Engineers gave a grade of “D” to the nation’s drinking water and wastewater infrastructure in its 2017 Infrastructure Report Card.

Michigan Section of American Water Works Association is a vital community of nearly 1,700 water professionals in Michigan leading the advancement of water knowledge and improving the value and quality of water in our lives. AWWA is the largest nonprofit, scientific and educational association dedicated to managing and treating water, the world’s most important resource.

###