

This statement is intended to provide information about the history and status of arsenic in water provided by the WWA to WWA members, and to articulate board policy on this matter.

## Background Information about Arsenic

According to the EPA's publication "Drinking Water Standard for Arsenic"<sup>1</sup>:

Arsenic occurs naturally in rocks, soil, water, air, plants, and animals. It can be further released into the environment through natural activities (...) or through human actions. Levels are generally higher in the western States due to geologic conditions (...) Because of their contact with naturally occurring underground rock formations, ground waters tend to have higher levels of arsenic than surface waters (...) Arsenic ingestion has been linked to many cancerous and non-cancerous health conditions.

Westside Water Association (WWA) sources are classified as ground water. WWA regularly tests all water sources for contaminants.

## The EPA Water Quality Standard

EPA has set the maximum allowable level for arsenic in drinking water at **10 ppb** (10 parts per billion). This health standard is intended to protect consumers from the effects of long-term, chronic exposure to arsenic. All public water systems have had to comply with this standard since 2006. This does not necessarily extend to private well systems.

This standard is a compromise. The EPA had attempted to impose an absolute health-based standard of **0 ppb**, which proved too costly to implement for many water systems. Nevertheless, this "non-enforceable public health goal is the level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health."<sup>2</sup>

## Water System Compliance with EPA Arsenic Health Standards

EPA enforcement and monitoring of public water system compliance with the arsenic health standard proved challenging; public water systems cannot simply stop delivering water whenever the arsenic standard is exceeded on a single reading. The EPA therefore established a compliance rule with a sampling protocol; the rule states that arsenic in the annual average of 4 quarterly water samples may not exceed 10 ppb.<sup>3</sup>

## Arsenic and Westside Water

As WWA has never delivered a 4-quarter average exceeding 10 ppb, it has never violated the EPA compliance rule. In summer, our water use is high; in the past, WWA supplemented the water supply by blending a high-arsenic water source to meet demand as needed. Individual WWA water samples in past summers have thus exceeded the EPA health standard. When this happened, notifications were provided via newsletter and the website. Past and present WWA boards have explored a variety of measures to mitigate the arsenic load during the summer. These efforts have included conservation alerts, filtration, and water source development. With the development of both the Anderson I well in 2015, and the Anderson II well in 2016, the WWA board anticipates that our water supply will now meet demand, even during the summer months, with no water samples exceeding the arsenic health standard.

## Westside Water Association Board Policy on Arsenic

*The 2016 WWA Board seeks to provide water that does not exceed EPA health standards nor violate EPA compliance standards. The Board seeks to deliver to its members the cleanest drinking water possible, given the financial and source quality constraints of the organization.*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPdf.cgi?Dockey=20001XXC.txt>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/national-primary-drinking-water-regulations>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/documents/train1-background.pdf>