



**For Immediate Release**  
March 20, 2020

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### ***Water utilities employ plans to ensure uninterrupted access***

Ensuring uninterrupted access to safe water is paramount among operators of Michigan's municipal water systems, who are taking steps to ensure residents have tap water for drinking, cooking and maintaining personal hygiene during the COVID-19 outbreak.

"Keeping our plants operating 24/7 is always our responsibility and it doesn't change during the unprecedented challenges brought on by the virus outbreak," says **Bonnifer Ballard**, MIAWWA executive director. "Our water professionals are trained to be proactive and have plans in place for a host of potential threats."

A recent survey of water utility operators by American Water Works Association found that more than 90 percent have business continuity plans in place or under development. Although absenteeism and continuity of operations are major areas of expected challenges from COVID-19 for water utilities, operators are confident they will continue operations.

To assist its members, MIAWWA has teamed up with the Michigan Rural Water Association and the Michigan Water Environment Association to ensure that water technicians across the state can fill spots if they are needed where workforces are affected."

The groups are creating a pool of licensed operators in case water and wastewater facilities experience staffing shortages because of illness.

“We all share a deep understanding of the importance of the reliability of quality water and wastewater services during a public health crisis,” says Ballard, “and we are committed to taking steps to ensure our water systems are functioning both reliably and safely.”

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other public health authorities recommend frequent hand washing with soap and water as one of the best defenses against the virus.

“Residents should rest assured that they can continue to drink and otherwise use water from their tap as usual because COVID-19 is not present in drinking water supplies,” Ballard explains, noting that disinfection processes such as those practiced by water systems across North America provide protection. Processes include filtration and disinfection of surface water supplies and disinfection of groundwater sources. Such treatments are effective in removing and/or inactivating viruses.

The Michigan Section of the American Water Works Association is a 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.

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