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The Authoritative Resource on Safe Water®

NewsRelease

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AWWA: Evaluate hexavalent chromium through regulatory process

DENVER (CO) – *The Environmental Working Group (EWG) today released a report raising concerns about the presence of chromium VI – also known as hexavalent chromium – in 31 of 35 water supplies it tested.*

Hexavalent chromium, a suspected carcinogen, is the contaminant made famous by the 2000 movie “Erin Brockovich.” AWWA Executive Director David LaFrance released the following statement:

“AWWA and water providers share Environmental Working Group’s concern for water quality and public health protection. Water utilities currently monitor for “total” chromium, of which hexavalent chromium is a sub-species. There is nearly universal compliance with the existing standard, which is good news for tap water consumers.

“The Safe Drinking Water Act, which was established to protect the quality of drinking water, requires a rigorous scientific approach for evaluating contaminants for regulation. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is currently looking at new health effects data on hexavalent chromium. The process should be completed in late 2011, and results will inform future regulatory actions.

“While EWG’s report may raise concerns, it’s important to remember that detecting a substance in water does not always imply a health risk. The key question to answer is whether the substance presents health concerns at the level it is detected. That’s why the federal regulatory process requires EPA to examine potential health impacts of the substance, paths of exposure and occurrence data. A thorough evaluation of all this data increases the likelihood that new regulations will offer meaningful risk reduction.”

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AWWA is the authoritative resource for knowledge, information, and advocacy to improve the quality and supply of water in North America and beyond. AWWA is the largest organization of water professionals in the world. AWWA advances public health, safety and welfare by uniting the efforts of the full spectrum of the entire water community. Through our collective strength we become better stewards of water for the greatest good of the people and the environment.