National Association of Water Companies (NAWC)

Media Kit
For regulated water companies, the top priority is reliably delivering safe, high-quality water. The stewardship of a community’s water service is a public trust, which these companies diligently protect.

**Strategic investment in water systems.** Water companies provide crucial capital for water infrastructure improvements. NAWC’s ten largest members alone collectively invest nearly $3 billion each year in their water systems. This amounts to more than the combined appropriation in 2018 for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund.

**Safe and reliable water.** Research, including a 2018 study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), shows that regulated water companies are far less likely to have health-based drinking water quality violations than their government-owned counterparts. A further analysis of the PNAS dataset on the state level confirmed that water companies have higher rates of SDWA compliance in each of the four states analyzed (CA, TX, PA, NJ).

**Unparalleled expertise.** Extensive environmental regulations and the complexities of water treatment and delivery are increasingly burdensome for municipalities. The lessons from Flint, Michigan serve as a stark reminder that having enhanced technical and operating expertise matters. Water companies offer a vast network of experienced water utility management professionals with a singular focus on ensuring safe and reliable water service to the communities they serve.

**Improving local economies.** Regulated water companies contribute to local economies by paying federal and state income taxes, local property taxes, and permit fees for projects, providing valuable government revenue. These companies also provide good-paying jobs, competitive benefits and training to local residents. When a community is served by a water company, it frees up municipalities to invest capital and resources in other priority projects.

**Environmental stewardship.** Active, responsible environmental leadership is paramount to providing water for the public health and safety of communities. Water companies continue to be at the forefront of a more holistic approach to resource management that embraces watershed planning and greener cities and fosters environmental and economic vitality.

**Committed to safety and security.** NAWC members have been at the forefront of water safety and security for years, even before the federal government or Congress mandated stringent measures. Water companies lead with successful, innovative and cutting-edge approaches to protect the communities they serve. Employee safety is also a top priority and data shows that private utilities have a stronger record than government-run utilities. A Governing Magazine analysis found that private utility employees have a nearly 52-percent lower work-related illness and injury rate than public utility employees.

**Additional regulatory oversight.** Regulated water companies are regulated at the federal level by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and at the state level by various state health and environmental agencies for compliance with the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act. They are also highly regulated by state public utility commissions, which set the rates regulated utilities can charge customers for water and wastewater service.

As communities across the country grapple with the complexities of providing water service, they are increasingly turning to regulated water companies as a trusted partner to build, maintain and operate these critical services. According to Bluefield Research data, water companies acquired 238 systems over a three-year period from August 2014 to August 2017. In that same period, only 42 systems reverted from private to municipal ownership.
Private involvement in public infrastructure is an American tradition. The urgent need to address the water challenges municipal water facilities face is drawing more attention to contract operations arrangements, also known as public-private partnerships, as a potential solution. In a contract operations arrangement, the public partner retains ownership and control of the assets, while the water contract operator handles varying components of operations. Well-managed partnerships deliver significant benefits to communities.

**Water challenges facing municipalities.** The [2017 National League of Cities Fiscal Conditions survey](https://www.nawc.org) finds “the start of fiscal contraction in the municipal sector” that indicates a coming revenue slowdown after several years of post-recession growth. To cover budget deficits, cities may delay or cancel water projects, which exacerbates the deterioration of our nation’s water systems. Partnerships can help struggling communities through an infusion of capital and economies of scale, offering a tailored and scalable approach for municipal partners that is proven to lower operating costs.

Communities that partner with a water contract operator benefit from:

- **Expertise to deliver tailored, innovative solutions.** Even with adequate funds, many communities are unable to design and/or implement infrastructure upgrades on their own. A tailored solution from a water contract operator can help meet a community’s unique needs.
- **Access to capital.** Water contract operators generally have ready access to capital that can help municipalities design, build and finance their water infrastructure projects.
- **Economies of scale.** As systems become increasingly complex and costlier to own and operate, smaller public water systems may find it challenging to meet certain regulatory requirements. Water contract operators can centralize and share costs to achieve economies-of-scale for services like billing, customer service and water testing and for equipment, tools, chemicals, and other materials.
- **Lower water system operating costs.** Water contract operators have strong incentives to operate as efficiently and sustainably as possible. Partnerships have been shown to lower a water system’s costs by 24 percent on average.
- **Decreased risk.** In many municipalities, significant operational, financial and environmental risks go along with managing water and wastewater systems. By transferring those risks to a contract partner, municipalities can reduce their own liability.
- **Strong CWA, SDWA and environmental compliance record.** When municipalities face Clean Water Act (CWA) and Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) compliance issues, water contract operators can provide the expertise and solutions to ensure compliance. Further, improving environmental stewardship is among the most often-cited reasons municipalities establish partnerships. Contract partners can help communities resolve their environmental compliance issues quickly.

The many partnership models are scalable and customizable to meet a community’s unique needs.

### Operations & Maintenance
Public partner contracts with a private partner to provide a specific service but public partner retains ownership and overall management.

### Design-Build-Operate (DBO)
**DBO-Finance**
A single private partner designs, builds and operates a facility, while ownership remains with the public partner. The model facilitates private sector financing of public projects. In some variations, the private partner is also responsible for financing the project.

### Concession
A private partner operates the system and finances and implements any required capital improvements for a designated period of time, and then transfers it to the public partner at the end of the specified time.
Our Active Member Water Companies

American Water
- California American Water
- Illinois American Water
- Indiana American Water
- Iowa American Water
- Kentucky American Water
- Maryland American Water
- Michigan American Water
- Missouri American Water
- New Jersey American Water
- New York American Water
- New Mexico American Water
- Pennsylvania American Water
- Tennessee American Water
- Virginia American Water
- West Virginia American Water

Aqua America
- Aqua Illinois, Inc.
- Aqua Indiana, Inc.
- Aqua New Jersey, Inc.
- Aqua North Carolina, Inc.
- Aqua Ohio, Inc.
- Aqua Pennsylvania, Inc.
- Aqua Texas, Inc.
- Aqua Indiana, Inc.

Aquarion Water Company
- Aquarion Water Company of Connecticut
- Aquarion Water Company of Massachusetts
- Aquarion Water Company of New Hampshire

Artesian Water Company
- Artesian Water Pennsylvania
- Artesian Water Company

Avon Water Company, Inc.
Baton Rouge Water Company
Baycliff Water
Beckley Water Company
Broadkiln Beach Water Company
Brooke Water, LLC
California Water Service Group
Chaparral City Water Company
College Utilities Corporation

Columbia Water Company
Connecticut Water Company
Dudley Water Supply, Inc.
East Pasadena Water Company
Envirolink, Inc.
EPCOR Water Arizona
EPCOR Water New Mexico
Geyserville Water Works
Golden State Water Company
Gordon's Corner Water Company
Graeagle Water Company
Hances Point Utilities Company
Hazardville Water Company
Hill Water Works, Inc.
Jacobs
Liberty Utilities
Middlesex Water Company
- Tidewater Utilities, Inc.
Milford Water Company
Newtown Artesian Water Company
Peoples Water Service Company
Rainbow Water Company
Robin Hood Lakes Water Company, Inc.
Rogina Water Company
Rosemount Water Company, Inc.
San Gabriel Valley Water Company
San Jose Water Company
INFRAMARK
Shorelands Water Company, Inc.
SouthWest Water Company
- Southwest Water Utilities
- Suburban Water Systems
- Monarch Utilities
- Nin America Texas

SUEZ
- SUEZ Water Bethel
- SUEZ Water Delaware
- SUEZ Water Idaho
- SUEZ Water New Jersey
- SUEZ Owego/Nichols
- SUEZ Water New York
• SUEZ Water Pennsylvania
• SUEZ Water Rhode Island
• SUEZ Water Toms River
• SUEZ Water Westchester

The Sandy Point Water Company
Torrington Water Company
Twin Lakes Water Works Corporation
Utilities, Inc.

• Bermuda Water Company
• Carolina Water Service of North Carolina
• Carolina Water Service of South Carolina
• Community Utilities of Florida
• Community Utilities of Georgia
• Community Utilities of Indiana
• Community Utilities of Louisiana
• Community Utilities of Maryland
• Community Utilities of Pennsylvania
• Great Basin Water Company
• Massanutten Public Service Corporation
• Montague Water Company
• Utilities Services of Illinois
• Water Service Corporation of Kentucky

Valencia Water Company
Valley Water Systems
Veolia North America
Walden Corporation
West San Martin Water Works
Whitinsville Water Company
York Water Company
GOVERNANCE
- Launched new strategic plan focused on state-level regulatory and legislative issues that impact growth of member companies
- Rob Powelson selected to lead recalibrated NAWC as President and Chief Executive Officer
- Rik Hull named EVP, Strategy & External Affairs and April Ballou named VP, Legal & State Regulatory Policy
- Adopted new bylaws to reflect the needs of a more nimble and strategically focused NAWC
- Established and populated the following new set of board-led standing committees:
  - The Contract Operations Committee
  - The Customer Satisfaction Committee
  - The Regulatory and Legislative Committee
  - The Safety, Security and Environmental Committee
  - The Small/Midsize Systems Committee

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
- Worked with U.S. EPA Headquarters and Regional Offices to promote new policy/regulations to remove regulatory barriers for the sale of publicly owned treatment works
- Engaged with EPA’s Office of Water and Office of Enforcement to share members’ commitment to environmental compliance and best practices
- Collaborated with other national associations to promote increased private industry participation in the water sector, elevating the issue to a national priority of the White House and EPA
- Achieved passage of America’s Water Infrastructure Act, which included language promoting the use of partnerships in order to address non-compliant systems
- Collaborated with American Water Works Association and Environmental Council of States to strategize and bring greater clarity and certainty on complex issues dealing with PFOS and PFOA

STATE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
- Issued RFP to develop a searchable Constructive Practices Database for members, which will be accessible through the NAWC website
- Developed, with member input, the following state-level priorities for the Association for 2019: (1) Fair Market Value Legislation; (2) Water Accountability; (3) the impact of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act on Contributions in Aid of Construction
- Drafted a NARUC Resolution on Water Accountability for Water and Wastewater Systems, which passed at the Annual NARUC Meeting in November of 2018
- Increased communication with NAWC state chapters through in-person visits, committee updates, and general outreach
- Interfaced with regulators at various events, including NARUC Meetings, regional meetings, and the MACRUC Commissioners’ Retreat
- Assisted NARUC Water Committee in developing panels on topics of interest to members and helped facilitate members’ participation in panels

NAWC: 2018 IN REVIEW

Aug. 2018: Robert F. Powelson named NAWC President and Chief Executive Officer

Dec. 2018: NAWC releases first study on state SDWA compliance rates
TRUTH FROM THE TAP

- Created 30 blog posts and generated 10 media placements, including placements in The Trentonian, Baltimore Sun, San Antonio Express-News, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, The Jersey Journal, South Jersey Times, Newsday, Pittsburgh Tribune and Water Technology
- Launched California microsite, complete with rate setting infographic and fact sheets rebutting new activist coalition claims
- Utilized studies to bolster messaging, including developing the first-ever state-level analysis of SDWA compliance in California, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Texas
- Presented to member companies and industry leadership, including at the NAWC Summit, CWA Spring Meeting, and NAWC Southeast Chapter Meeting
- Expanded digital footprint with almost 75,000 visitors to the TFTT website and over 1.1 million Twitter impressions

COMMUNICATIONS

- Promoted to the media NAWC organizational changes, including the announcement of Rob Powelson as the new CEO and subsequent high-profile hires
- Created resources for members to use on NAWC’s strategic priorities, including fair market value, Water Quality Accountability Act legislation and consolidation/partnerships
- Refined and strengthened NAWC messaging through an audit of members’ public-facing material and a poll of the NAWC Communications Council
- Conducted media outreach on the launch of new NAWC Contract Operations Committee
- Provided members with guest speaker experts on priority issue areas, including corporate social responsibility and activist investors
- Collaborated with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to promote Infrastructure Week through a Twitter chat and joint blog post

EVENTS & AWARDS

- Organized well-received National Water Summit in San Antonio – 84% of survey respondents said it was of above average to excellent value, 88% of survey respondents said it was of above average to excellent quality
- Hosted calls for members to inform them of how the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will impact the water sector
- Presented outgoing NARUC President Jack Betkoski with NAWC Water Droplet for his exceptional contributions to the industry
- NAWC Indiana Chapter named State Senator Eric Koch the Legislator of the Year
- Presented outgoing Board President Chris Franklin with Water Droplet for his outstanding leadership
- Sponsored 2018 Women’s Energy Summit in Chicago, IL
- Announced California Water Service as winner of two NAWC Management Innovation Awards
- Announced American Water’s Angelita Fasnacht as winner of 2018 Living Water Award
- NAWC PAC supported pro-water infrastructure Members of Congress
- NAWC Southeast chapter hosted Water Infrastructure Summit in New Orleans, LA
- Hosted networking events for members, including the NAWC Members’ Breakfast and the Water Dinner at the Winter and Summer Annual NARUC meetings
- Hosted Commissioner Water Policy Forum and Staff Water Policy Forum

Oct. 2018: Federal partnership legislation encouraging consolidation passes

Oct. 2018: Christopher H. Franklin recognized by the membership for his outstanding leadership of NAWC

NAWC membership provides value to all of your company’s employees. One of our key initiatives in 2019 will be to deliver greater value and deepen our engagement with members through our new standing committees, chapters, events and communications. If you have colleagues that could benefit from NAWC’s resources and opportunities, please send their names, titles and contact information to membership@nawc.com.
EDITOR’S NOTE — In September, Water Finance & Management sat down with new president and CEO of the National Association of Water Companies (NAWC), Robert Powelson. Powelson officially joined NAWC in August 2018 after a year serving on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), to which he was confirmed in August 2017 by the U.S. Senate.

Prior to his appointment to FERC, Powelson served on the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission since 2008, including as Chairman from 2011 to 2015. While on the PUC, he was particularly focused on Pennsylvania’s water infrastructure development, promoting the availability of safe drinking water and reducing unaccounted-for water. We chatted with Powelson about what it’s like to be working in the water sector and his thoughts on several upcoming NAWC initiatives.

Water Finance & Management: First, welcome to NAWC! Since joining, what are your thoughts on the current state of the U.S. water sector and what are you looking to bring to the association?

Robert Powelson: I’m excited to join NAWC and help tell the very positive success story of NAWC member companies. Our members are first-in-class in many areas, including sound asset management, stellar compliance with federal health and environmental regulations, and water system technical expertise. Water companies already serve 73 million Americans – about 1 in 4 – and have the capital investment, the expertise and the experience to help communities address their unique challenges to ensure systems continue to serve residents for generations to come.

For good reason, water utilities across the country are required to meet increasingly stringent and complex water quality standards. I am happy to report that NAWC member companies have risen to this challenge and have a great track record with respect to complying with these standards. However, with the enormous amount of fragmentation there is within the U.S. water sector, many smaller and municipally-owned water systems find themselves struggling to meet these standards.

There are approximately 52,000 community drinking water systems and over 90 percent of these systems serve fewer than 10,000 people, which the U.S. EPA defines as a “small system.” Tens of thousands of these systems serve less than 3,300 people. Increasingly, these small
utilities struggle with a lack of expertise to operate and maintain their systems and rising treatment costs coupled with a lack of financial resources to make necessary investments in aging infrastructure. In fact, according to U.S. EPA data, more than 1,200 community water systems have been in serious noncompliance for at least three years.

All of this points to a great need for consolidation, partnerships and a more integrated approach in the water and wastewater industries to achieve economies of scale and facilitate capital attraction, as well as technological and financial viability. Partnering with a NAWC member company is a proven way for struggling systems to access capital and expertise because our members understand how crucial it is to strategically invest in water systems. The six largest NAWC members combined invest $2.7 billion annually in their water systems – that’s more than the total federal appropriation for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs. I see it as my mission to tell this story and educate regulators and state officials about the value that NAWC member companies can bring to this conversation.

**WF&M:** Since you came from the energy regulatory side, what about the water sector is different from electricity, natural gas, etc.? What is different about how utilities are managed/operated? Do you see any similarities?

Powelson: I always like to remind people that water is very unique as it’s the only public utility that is ingested. This distinction is important for everyone – from regulators to system operators – to keep in mind. As mentioned earlier, there are more than 52,000 community drinking water systems in the United States. Compare that with the fact that there are only 3,300 energy utilities in the country and you start to see the extent of water industry fragmentation. As a result, the water industry is playing catch-up in terms of instituting alternative regulatory policies and ratemaking mechanisms. It is also important to keep in mind that the water sector is one of the most capital intensive among state-regulated utility industries.

I’m concerned that, unlike our brethren in the electric sector, customers don’t fully understand the cost to treat and distribute this public utility service. On average, water rates are increasing 7 percent per year, and where they aren’t increasing, it can likely be attributed to insufficient investment. It’s incumbent on all of us in the water industry to educate customers on the complexity and costs of delivering this life-sustaining service. The days of water as the silent service are in the past.

**WF&M:** What trends are you seeing with respect to private financing and P3s in the water/wastewater sector?

Powelson: Flint, Pittsburgh and Baltimore have made it clear to municipalities that having enhanced technical and operating expertise matters and that water system investment is not something that can be delayed. With the ever-increasing strain on municipal and state budgets, it’s not surprising that communities and decisionmakers turn to the private sector for help.
As previously stated, partnerships are one way to address these challenges. Stakeholders across the water sector have endorsed the idea that partnerships – which may include different models, from sharing of managerial and technical resources to acquisitions – are a prudent step for many in the water sector to take. Working with NAWC members brings many benefits: improved operational efficiencies, stronger compliance with EPA regulations, increased purchasing power and greater access to capital.

The unique benefit of a public-private partnership approach is that these agreements can be scaled and customized to meet a community’s unique water and wastewater needs – there is no cookie cutter approach. Municipalities are able to share risk with the private sector, which is a huge benefit on top of those already mentioned. Data shows that communities that partner with a water company are overwhelmingly satisfied, evidenced by the 97 percent contract renewal rate between 2000 and 2016.

**WF&M: Do regulatory mandates imposed on energy utilities result in infrastructure funding for, say, water utilities? If so, how? Is it a viable/sustainable source of funding?**

Powelson: It is possible for regulatory mandates on energy utilities to result in lower costs for water utilities, and therefore increase the availability of capital for infrastructure spending. Two examples come to mind:

Energy efficiency and conservation programs could result in reduced energy bills for large users of energy, such as water utilities, or could offset the costs of energy efficiency and conservation projects that are already planned (although jurisdictions generally disfavor free ridership).

Energy infrastructure replacement mandates/incentives could result in reduced costs on water utilities if the energy and water utilities are able to coordinate and co-locate underground infrastructure replacement projects, which allows for a sharing of expenses that would otherwise be borne completely by each of the utilities.

Whether such mandates are sustainable depends on many variables, including the ratemaking treatment afforded to such savings in costs, and therefore would need to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

**WF&M: As you likely know, a major topic of conversation across the water sector is low-income affordability. Does the water sector need to do more to address this issue?**

Powelson: The enormous need for investment in America’s water infrastructure has resulted in ever-increasing rates for water systems across the board. A recent report from the Bipartisan Policy Center identified several factors that can help address water affordability challenges, including partnerships with the private sector, sound asset management and strategic infrastructure investment. Water is a local issue and there should be a rate structure in place that supports necessary investment. NAWC members are committed to addressing affordability challenges and many already provide programs to assist low-income customers.
NAWC and our members are accurately aware of how increasing rates impact our low-income customers, and we are committed to working with regulators and other key stakeholders to craft a holistic solution to this complex challenge.
City better off putting mismanaged water system in private hands
Baltimore Sun
August 20, 2018

It is unfortunate that anti-private activists, namely Food & Water Watch, are driving a misinformation campaign in Baltimore that ignores hard data proving the strong performance of water companies. Instead of examining the available and proven solutions to help fix its utility operations and infrastructure issues, Food & Water Watch believes the city should restrict its options. Rather than make political charges or resort to name calling, I think the record speaks for itself (“Privatizing Baltimore’s water system isn’t the answer. Banning privatization isn’t either,” Aug. 8).

During the last decade, Baltimore has faced four instances of noncompliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act, putting public health at risk. By contrast, regulated water companies have an exceptional record of providing safe drinking water to customers. Recent research published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences found that health-based drinking water quality violations occur significantly less often in systems owned by private water companies compared to government-owned systems. This strong compliance record is a result of many things, including strategic and proactive investment in water infrastructure, access to capital for improvements, operational expertise and experience and a strong regulatory framework.

Unfortunately, activists like Food & Water Watch are pushing a false narrative about rates and control. Here are the facts. Rates are going up across the country — about 7 percent a year — for both government-run and private water utilities as responsible utilities make the necessary infrastructure investments. However, it is important to know that water companies never set their own rates. In a public-private partnership, they are set by the municipality as part of the negotiated contract. When a water company owns the water system assets, rates are set by the state public utility commission and under any model — public or private — water always remains a public utility service to customers. Let me add: we are the only public utility service that consumers ingest, so water quality and proper treatment are the gold standard for our member companies.

Across the country, water companies are successfully working with cities just like Baltimore to address water challenges. For example, in Buffalo, N.Y., an expertly tailored partnership was developed to meet the unique needs of the city and its residents, resulting in improved system management, enhanced performance metrics to increase accountability, and additional city revenue. I would also underscore that our member companies embrace environmental
stewardship and could serve as a key stakeholder in helping clean the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The bottom line is that water companies offer proven expertise and experience to help communities address infrastructure and affordability needs. The complex challenges Baltimore must confront are significant and demand that the city base its decisions on facts — not restrict options based on activist misinformation.

Robert F. Powelson, Washington, D.C.
The writer is the president and chief executive officer of the National Association of Water Companies.
Robert Powelson: Misinformation campaign will prolong Pittsburgh's water woes
Pittsburgh Tribune-Review
Tuesday, February 19, 2019

Using unequivocal language including “ineptness,” “negligence” and a “lack of training and expertise,” Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro filed 161 criminal charges this month against the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA). The filings laid out how the drinking water provider that serves over 300,000 Pittsburghers was criminally liable under the state’s Safe Drinking Water Act for failing to notify residents or test water for lead when replacing service lines. Shapiro summarized: “It was the culmination of a multitude of failures throughout the entire authority that led to these criminal charges.”

Pittsburgh is suffering the unfortunate and serious effects of long-term delayed infrastructure investment and utility mismanagement. Like many public water systems across the country, for decades PWSA underinvested in its system, choosing low water rates over proactive infrastructure replacement, putting public health at risk.

Yet, in the face of the water authority’s well-documented failures over many years that have now culminated in 161 criminal charges being filed against it, a few voices outrageously still defend PWSA and advocate for continued government operation of the water system.

The op-ed “Real culprit in Pittsburgh’s lead crisis” (Feb. 6, TribLIVE) ignores facts and blatantly peddles misinformation in a desperate effort to distract from PWSA’s stunning failures. It’s nothing more than a shameless attempt to divert blame and downplay how dire the situation is at PWSA. This defense of the failing status quo is especially shocking given the serious health risks associated with PWSA’s failures.

The author claims a water company that once provided a narrow scope of consulting services to PWSA is to blame for the lead challenges in Pittsburgh even though the chair of the PWSA board rejected that idea out of hand more than two years ago. In an October 2016 article, Alex Thomson, chairman of PWSA’s board of directors, said, “Veolia’s not responsible for the lead issue PWSA has — these lead issues are the result of the fact we have 75- to 100-year-old infrastructure.”

The contract between Veolia and PWSA explicitly defined a limited consulting arrangement, where PWSA retained all decision-making authority over operations, maintenance, capital spending and staffing. Yet why should the author let the facts get in the way of her ideologically motivated attack on a water company?
We’ve seen this far too many times in communities across the country. Groups opposed to water company involvement are willing to desperately dig their heels in to advocate for government operation even when it puts residents in harm’s way. They choose to ignore the facts that show water companies’ superior record of delivering high-quality, safe water. In fact, a recent analysis of EPA data shows that private water utilities in Pennsylvania are 37.4 percent less likely to violate the Safe Drinking Water Act compared to government-run utilities.

This uninformed spin by activists, including false claims that even PWSA rejected long ago, only serves to divert attention and deflect blame, leaving Pittsburhgers no closer to being able to count on safe water from their taps. Residents deserve better from their water authority. Pittsburgh’s water system needs investment and expertise – two things that the private sector excels at providing.

The shocking and shameful organizational failure of the PWSA has put the health of the 300,000 residents it serves at risk. If Pittsburgh is serious about fixing its longstanding water challenges, the first step is to accept that the status quo of government operation is not working, and there are 161 criminal charges to back up this fact. As the former chairman of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, I want to personally applaud Shapiro for holding PWSA accountable for the generational failures that have hampered this system for decades.

*Robert Powelson is the chief executive officer of the National Association of Water Companies.*
Letter: Robert Powelson: Private water systems have fewer health violations
Providence Journal
Jan 5, 2019

The Dec. 4 letter by J. Michael Denney (“Why it’s a bad idea to privatize Providence water”) makes inaccurate claims about water companies in regard to safety, water quality and infrastructure.

The evidence — hard data from scientific, published studies — overwhelmingly shows that water companies have a superior record of providing high-quality drinking water compared to municipal governments.

A 2018 study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences reviewed EPA data from 1982-2015 and found that “private ownership” of a water system was “significantly associated with higher compliance” with the Safe Drinking Water Act. This confirms previous studies, including one out of Georgetown University and Texas A&M that showed privately-owned water systems are 24 percent less likely to incur health violations of the SDWA than government-owned systems.

When it comes to safety, data shows that private utilities have a stronger record than government-run utilities. A Governing Magazine analysis found that private utility employees have a nearly 52-percent lower work-related illness and injury rate than public utility employees.

Further, the letter completely ignores water companies’ significant infrastructure investment. The six largest U.S. water companies alone invest nearly $2.7 billion each year to improve their community tap water systems. This is equivalent to the combined total annual federal appropriation for our nation’s two major water infrastructure programs.

Robert Powelson
Washington, D.C.
Robert F. Powelson is the president and chief executive officer of the National Association of Water Companies (NAWC).

Prior to joining NAWC, he served as a Federal Energy Regulatory Commissioner. Powelson was nominated to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission by President Donald J. Trump in May 2017, and confirmed by the U.S. Senate on August 4, 2017.

Commissioner Powelson came to FERC from the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, where he served since June 2008, and led as Chairman from February 24, 2011-May 7, 2015. Under Commissioner Powelson’s leadership, Pennsylvania ratepayers have had an active voice on issues such as nuclear power production, renewable investment, broadband deployment, infrastructure development, unaccounted-for water and cyber security.

In 2011, Commissioner Powelson served on Pennsylvania’s Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission, which reviewed the Commonwealth’s existing statutes, regulations and policies and provided recommendations to develop a comprehensive strategic proposal for the responsible and environmentally sound development of Marcellus Shale.

Powelson is past president of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, where he also was a member of the Board of Directors. He served as chairman of the NARUC Committee on Water and represented the Water Committee on NARUC’s Task Force on Climate Policy. He was active in NARUC activities involving critical infrastructure and nuclear waste disposal. Commissioner Powelson worked very closely with NARUC leadership on aggressive pipeline safety standards with the U.S. Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.

Prior to joining the Pennsylvania PUC, Powelson served as president of the Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry. In 2005, he was selected by the Eisenhower Presidential Fellows to be a U.S. fellow in Singapore and Australia. His previous employment includes service as the director of Government Relations for the Delaware County Chamber and staff assistant to former Congressman Curt Weldon.

A native of Pennsylvania, Powelson is a graduate of St. Joseph’s University and received a Master of Governmental Administration degree from the University of Pennsylvania.
SAVE THE DATE
2019 NAWC Water Summit

October 13-15, 2019

Grand Sheraton Nashville
Downtown Nashville, Tennessee

The 2019 NAWC Summit is hosted by the National Association of Water Companies, which represents regulated water and wastewater companies, as well as ones engaging in partnerships with municipal utilities. NAWC members provide 73 million Americans with safe and reliable water service every day and have an exceptional record of compliance with federal and state health and environmental regulations. NAWC estimates that its six largest members alone collectively invest $2.7 billion each year in their water and wastewater systems.

WE ARE MOVING WATER FORWARD.
WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US.