Is America Facing a Tap Water Crisis?

May 11, 2017

If you think Flint, Michigan, is the only U.S. city with a water problem, you're wrong. A recent study about drinking water in the United States conducted by the National Resources Defense Council finds that one in four Americans are currently serviced by tap water that is either unsafe or not properly monitored under national pollution standards, Fox News reports.

Specifically, the report showed that in 2015, there were 80,000 reported violations of U.S. safety regulations, such as the Safe Drinking Water Act, in community water systems that serviced nearly 77 million people across the country.

What's more, about 15 percent of these offenses were health-based and affected nearly 27 million people, or one in 12 Americans. For example, communities reported contamination from lead, copper, arsenic or other dangerous heavy metals. Other violations detailed in the report included the failure of local authorities to report contaminated drinking water to the public and to properly test community water supplies.

The assessment also noted that problems with drinking water were most pronounced in sparsely populated or rural areas of the country. (Nearly 70 percent of all safety violations tied to water systems served fewer than 500 people.) These issues were largely tied to serious infrastructure troubles within their systems (just as in Flint) that many poor communities couldn't afford to upgrade.

Whether the new administration will help to improve water systems in these impoverished areas remains unclear. President Trump supports infrastructure investment, but he's also proposed cutting funds for the Environmental Protection Agency — which conducts much of these clean water tests — by nearly a third.

Nevertheless, EPA reps said the administration vowed to uphold the agency's mission to protect America's drinking water, a priority included in its core mission.

Click here to read the full report, and click here to learn more about the water crisis in Flint, Michigan.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.