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WQA PRESS RELEASE

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Cities, states fail to utilize cost-effective option to meet lower arsenic maximum contaminant level

Lisle, Illinois – December 2, 2004 Often overlooked in the debates for a safe and cost-effective solution to meet contaminant standards such as arsenic—and one approved by the USEPA—is the end-of-the-line use of POU/POE devices, frequently the most economical solution to both arsenic removal *and* source water scarceness.

In a typical scenario that is being echoed in small towns across the nation, officials in the small town of Fernley, Nevada recently told the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District Board that Fernley's primary source of drinking water by mid-2006 would be the Truckee Canal rather than the wells from which all of Fernley's water is currently drawn.

This shift in Fernley's primary water resource came about because an arsenic-removing water treatment plant for the city's groundwater would cost about $7 million while a plant to treat canal irrigation water for consumption would be closer to $5 million. It's simple economics, but perhaps not the most cost-effective solution.

Fernley's groundwater just meets the old federal arsenic standard for drinking water of 50 ppb—but is not close to the new 10 ppb MCL, set to become effective by late January, 2006. (Fernley received an extension from Nevada and won't have to meet the new standard until 2009.)

With a population that has doubled in the past eight years, Fernley must also deal with he mounting issue of the *quantity* of water available for the population. It's a huge conundrum for smaller towns—increased costs of treatment of a dwindling supply for a growing population.

Small communities like Fernley should factor into their financial research that only *1% or less* of the water needs to be treated. POU and POE do not need to treat the irrigation, fire fighting, and industrial water in a community.

Many—if not most—local water treatment officials are still unaware of EPA's officially recognized option of using POU/POE technologies to meet EPA guidelines for MCLs—including arsenic. Also, many State officials don't recognize the option of using POU/POE, even though the USEPA does.

Local water treatment officials and city officials owe it to their consumers to explore the financially viable POU/POE option. For more information about using POU/POE distributed treatment, call 630 505 0160.

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