Endangering Community Drinking Water

Leaking underground storage tanks (“USTs”) are one of the most serious threats to the quality of our nation’s groundwater. Fifty percent of the nation’s population, and 100 percent inh

C rrent Ad` inistr tion F i s to Protect Drin ing ter Q ity

Leaking underground storage tanks ("USTs") are one of the most serious threats to our nation's drinking water supplies. Despite recent cuts in public health and environmental funding, the federal government has $2.4 billion in surplus funds in the UST program, which can only be spent on cleaning up contamination from USTs. However, the current administration has requested only 3 percent of these dedicated surplus funds, despite a nationwide 22 percent decline in the pace of cleanups between 2003 and 2004. The federal government should protect public health by using surplus funds to help states across the nation clean up leaking USTs.

Cleanups Protect Public Health

Fifty percent of the nation's population, including virtually 100 percent in rural areas, uses groundwater for drinking water. Leaking USTs threaten groundwater quality in 45 states. These tanks can hold toxins that quickly spreads through soil and water and that can cause cancer and harm developing children.

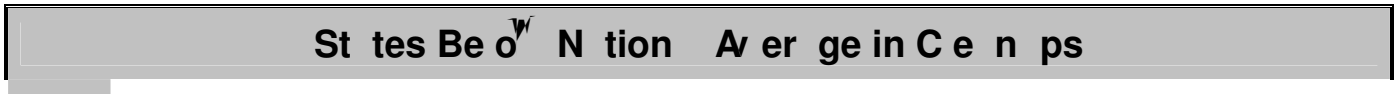
Congress created the UST program in 1984 to address pollution caused by USTs. In 1986, Congress created a federal UST fund to expedite cleanups and required owners and operators of USTs to demonstrate that they can clean up sites. A 1/10th of one cent fee on gas sales provides the fund with money. Congress also directed EPA to create regulations that all federally-regulated USTs had to meet by 1998.

Contamination Harms Communities

Leaking USTs can threaten community and individual drinking water supplies, contaminate houses and businesses with toxic vapors, pollute lo

Se/ ere S o" do" n in the P ce of C e n ps Across the N tion

Following years of progress in cleaning up leaking USTs, national cleanup figures have


St tes Be o N tion Av er ge in C e n ps

D ngero s Che ic s Le fro ndergro nd Stor ge n s

Leaking underground

Cont ` in tion hre tens \ ner e Peop e

Leaking underground storage tanks (USTs) hold gasoline, diesel fuel,

- Mi ion Peop e Drin Fro` More h n S` Gro nd ter Syste` s

S s nd heir F ci ities Co d End nger Chi dren nd Other \ ner e Peop e

Cont ` in tion End ngers Co` ` nities Across the Co ntry

One gallon of petroleum can contaminate one million gallons of groundwater.

One pin-prick sized hole in an underground storage tank can leak 400 gallons of fuel a year.

Gasoline-related compounds were detected in 10% of drinking water sources sampled across the nation.

More than 1,800 municipal water supplies are ***known to be*** contaminated with MTBE.

Twenty-seven states reported plumes of MTBE contamination thousands of feet in length.

Oil companies knew of MTBE's potential to contaminate groundwater as early as 1981.

Undercutting Protections

Officials have failed to ensure that 30% of all federally-regulated USTs, totaling more than 200,000 tanks, are properly operated and maintained.

EPA and state officials have failed to inspect all 76,000 closed tanks that do not meet current federal requirements, despite officials having found inactive tanks still pose a risk of contaminat

Protect Co nities nd Drin ing ter

The federal government should undertake five essential actions to protect communities and their drinking water supplies from UST contamination. Without such action, the current slowdown in cleanups could grow more severe, resulting in an increased number of contaminated sites and reversing decades of progress since Congress created federal UST protections in 1984.

The federal government should increase funding, pollution prevention measures, efforts to make polluters pay to clean up their contamination, enforcement of minimum federal safeguards and the public's right to know when polluters contaminate the environment. Delaying such protections will increase threats to communities, drinking water

St tes B c og of C e n ps t Le ing ndergro nd Stor ge n s							
R n	St te	C e n p B c og	of Pop Re ying on Gro nd ter s Drin ing ter	R n	St te	C e n p B c og	of Pop Re ying on Gro nd ter s Drin ing ter
1	FL	17,544	93	29	WY	1,132	59
2	CA	15,049	46	30	MT	1,085	53
3	MI	9,039	46	31	LA	1,015	61
4	IL	8,591	33	32	CO	998	

Percent of S Sitese

Percent of S Sites C e ned p

N tion Av er ge for C e n ps, percent of sites c e ned p

R n	St te	Percent of Sites C e ned p	Percent of Sites C e ned p	Confir ed Re e ses	N er of C e n ps
47	TN	19%	90%	12,512	11,291
48	VA	20%	91%	10,181	9,271
49	ME	23%	94%	2,129	1,995
50	ND	24%	95%	811	768
50	MS	24%	95%	6,456	6,155
	Total				

op St tes ith Lo est Percent of Sites C e ned p

R n	St te	St te s N t Av er ge	C e ned p	Confir ed Re e ses	ot C e n ps	R n	St te	St te s N t Av er ge	C e ned p	Confir ed Re e ses	ot C e n ps
1											

nd Stor ge n Progr ` F nding By R n

O tst nding C i` s ` i ions	R n	St te	F nding Deficit ` i ions	ot Appro C rrent B nce ` i ions	O tst nding C i` s ` i ions
$170.00	25	MS	$5.65	$5.90	$0.25
$1,200	26	ME	$5.98	$5.98	$0.00
$4.43	27	MD	$6.17	$6.17	$0.00
$58	28	NH	$6.23	$9.14	$2.91
$20	29	ND	$6.67	$7.68	1.01[I]
$28.20	30	MN	$7.60	$19.60	$12.00
$5.45	31	AR	$9.38	$15.15	$5.77
$20	32	OK	$10.14	$10.70	$0.56
$15.83	33	LA	$13.03	$15.09	$2.06
$214	34	IL	$14.20	$22.00	$7.80
$9	35	NM	$16.37	$19.77	3.4[D]

St te ndergro nd Stor ge n Progr ` F nding

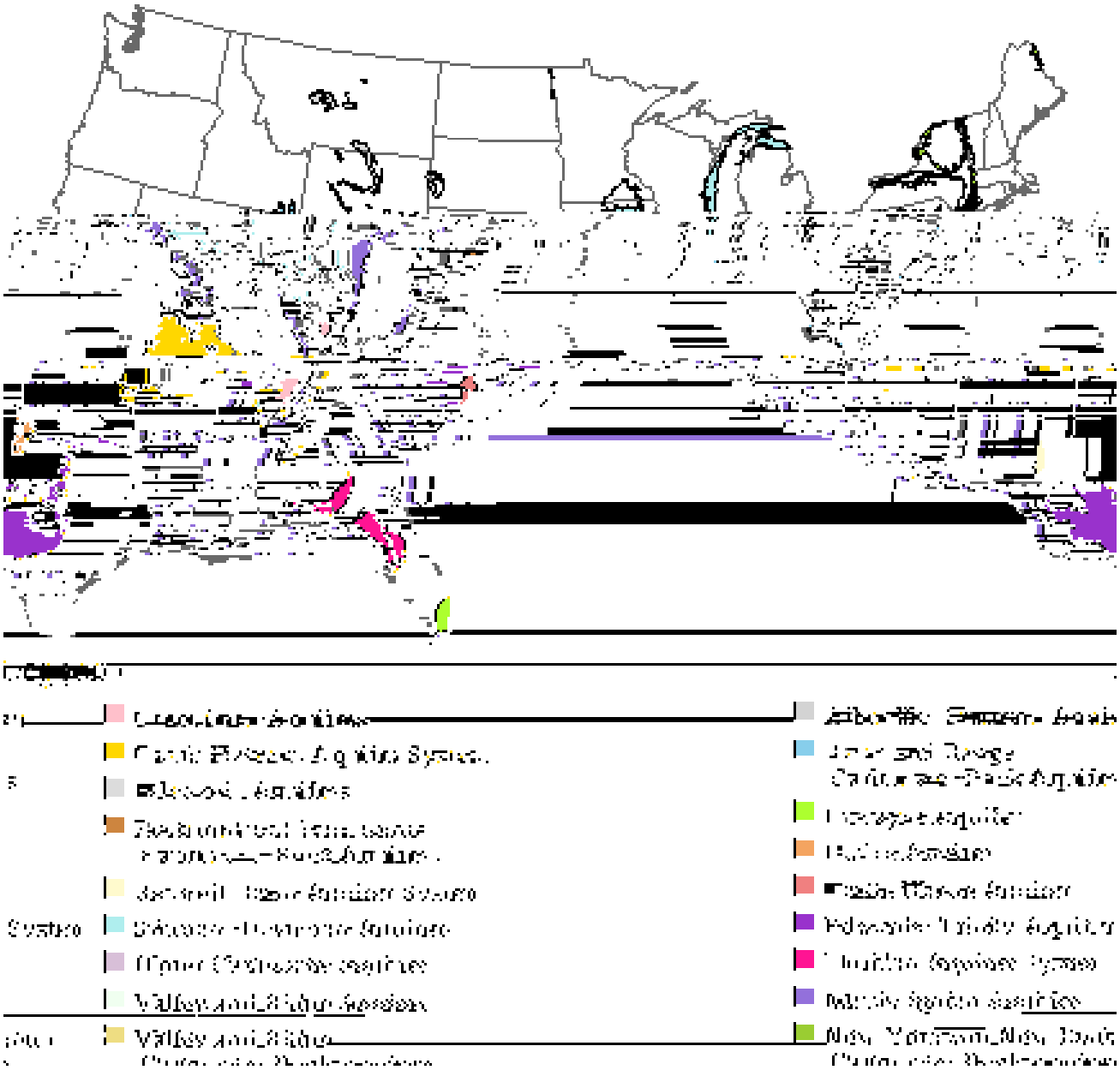
Sources: ASTSWMO, 2004 State Financial Assurance Funds Sur

St te ndergro nd Stor ge n Progr ` F nding y St te							
St te	F nding Deficit ` i ions	ot Appro C rrent B nce ` i ions	O tst nding C i` s ` i ions	St te	F nding Deficit ` i ions	ot Appro C rrent B nce ` i ions	O tst nding C i` s ` i ions
AK	$0	$0	NA	NC	-$27.52	0.68[J]	$28.20
AL	-$4.60	$0.90	$5.50		-$4.15	1.3[K]	$5.45

St te ndergro nd Stor ge n Progr ` F nding St

Major Karst Aquifers in the United States

Karst regions contain aquifers that can provide plentiful supplies of groundwater. However, many karst aquifers are also vulnerable to contamination because contamination can move rapidly through the ground and throughout the aquifer. Karst regions comprise 20 percent of our nation's land surface area and provide 40 percent of the nation's groundwater that is used for drinking water.



Source: U.S. Geological Survey, *Karst* (Available at http://water.usgs.gov/ogw/karst/) (Last checked on April 8, 2005).

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