

PENNSYLVANIA WATER COMPANIES PROVIDE SAFER WATER THAN GOVERNMENT-RUN SYSTEMS



Water companies
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Stronger compliance with Safe Water Drinking Act

Water quality standards established through the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) provide critical performance metrics for every water utility across the country. Water companies are proud of their strong water quality record. In fact, EPA data has repeatedly shown that water systems owned and operated by water companies are significantly less likely to violate the SDWA than water systems owned and operated by local governments.¹

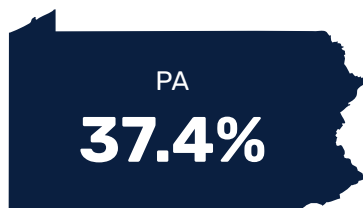
Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (2018)



A landmark 2018 study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) found that water companies are far less likely to have health-based drinking water quality violations than utilities owned and operated by local governments. The study analyzed EPA data on health-related violations of the SDWA for 17,900 communities over a 34-year period (1982 to 2015), making it the largest and most comprehensive review of SDWA water compliance data ever conducted.

ACCORDING TO THE STUDY AUTHORS:
“Privately owned utilities are found to be less vulnerable to violations than government ownership.”²

Pennsylvania Analyses of PNAS Data (2018)



In Pennsylvania, systems owned and operated by water companies are 37.4 percent less likely to have a health-based SDWA violation than government-run systems.³

Because the PNAS study authors published their dataset, other researchers have been able to conduct further analyses of SDWA compliance based on the PNAS study. In a 2018 analysis conducted by Encina Advisors, researchers used the PNAS dataset to analyze SDWA compliance records at the state level, including in Pennsylvania. This is the first analysis ever conducted that compared water quality records for municipalities and water companies in individual states. Applying the PNAS study models to state-level datasets, the analysis found strong statistical evidence that water company ownership is associated with stronger water quality among systems in Pennsylvania.

¹ Konisky and Teodoro, “When Governments Regulate Governments” November 2014; American Water Intelligence, “Investor-Owned Water Firms Boast Sterling SDWA Record” October 2011

² Allaire, Wu and Lall in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, “National Trends in Drinking Water Quality Violations” February 2018

³ Encina Advisors, “Analysis of Privately Owned Water Utilities and Drinking Water Quality in Selected States” December 2018; The Encina Advisors state analyses utilized the same dataset as the PNAS study (2018). The state analyses were commissioned by the National Association of Water Companies (NAWC).