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Subject: California's wet winter eases water policy tensions | EPA asks court to pause asbestos rule litigation | MIT device pulls drinking water from air without power

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June 17, 2025



The water sector's most relevant news

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TODAY'S NEWS

California's wet winter eases water policy tensions

California's recent wet winter has eased political tensions over water issues, contributing to a more cooperative dynamic between the federal government and state officials. Increased water availability has reduced the urgency to challenge existing water rules, although experts remain concerned about the future reliability of water in the state. "Our goal really is to try and implement some of the adaptive management and other actions that are in the [Biden-era rules] that provide some flexibility to benefit water supply and the fishery as well," said Thaddeus Bettner, executive director of the Sacramento River Settlement Contractors. **Full Story:** [Politico](#) (6/16)

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Biosolids and PFAS

Earlier this year, EPA released its Draft Sewage Sludge Risk Assessment for PFOA and PFAS, which represents the agency's first step towards addressing the potential hazards related to PFAS in biosolids.

[Hear what our experts say about PFAS in biosolids.](#)



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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

EPA asks court to pause asbestos rule litigation

The Environmental Protection Agency is asking the US Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit for a six-month pause in litigation regarding a rule that phases out chrysotile asbestos, as it aims to reassess provisions that affect chlorine manufacturers. The EPA plans to review whether the rule's requirements exceed the 2016 Toxic Substances Control Act amendments and to potentially revise workplace protections. **Full Story:** [Bloomberg Law](#) (6/17)

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SCOTUS to hear oil companies' appeal on La. lawsuits

The US Supreme Court has agreed to hear an appeal by Chevron, ExxonMobil and other oil companies to move lawsuits from two Louisiana parishes to federal court. The parishes, Plaquemines and Cameron, accuse the companies of damaging coastal marshlands over decades, and the oil companies argue that the cases should be in federal court because the actions were taken under federal contracts during World War II. **Full Story:** [U.S. News & World Report](#) (6/16), [Reuters](#) (6/16)

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CIRCULAR WATER ECONOMY

Poultry farms in Oklahoma raise water usage alarm

The rapid expansion of industrial poultry farms in southeast Oklahoma, particularly those supplying Tyson Foods, has raised concerns about water usage from the Antlers aquifer. Residents worry about the depletion and potential contamination of groundwater, exacerbated by a loophole allowing

farms to use water without permits. "Our law is designed to deplete the aquifer. It is designed to mine the water for economic purposes," said Sara Gibson of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board.

Full Story: [The Oklahoman \(Oklahoma City\)](#) (tiered subscription model) (6/16)

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INFRASTRUCTURE WATCH

Northern Colorado taps aquifer for future water needs

The Fort Collins Loveland Water District in Colorado has bought into an aquifer near the state's border with Wyoming and will work with Front Range H2O Transfer to tap into it by 2029. The project will help provide drinking water supplies as the area's population surges. "Most surface water needs to be supplied and also treated. Because this water doesn't require treatment, this saves us about \$200 million by not building a treatment plant specifically for this water," says Chris Pletcher, general manager of the water district. **Full Story:** [KCNC-TV \(Denver\)](#) (6/15)

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WATER ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH

Read more from Water Environment Research (WER) [here](#).

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- **Physiological and metabolic responses of *Limnoperna fortunei* to KMnO₄ and NaClO exposure** (6/9)

FUNDING AND FINANCING

FEMA cuts \$150M for South Florida flood control projects

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has canceled \$150 million in grants for South Florida flood control, citing a need to minimize waste and align with executive priorities. The decision affects projects managed by the South Florida Water Management District, leaving areas such as Miami-Dade and Broward counties vulnerable to flooding, and local leaders and residents have expressed deep concern. **Full Story:** [WFOR-TV/WBFS-TV \(Doral, Fla.\)](#) (6/16)

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STORMWATER

Sustainability key to Queens Botanical Garden project

The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and the Department of Design and Construction have begun a \$34 million project to build the Joan N. and Norman Bluestone Education Center at the Queens Botanical Garden. The project will feature sustainable design elements, including solar panels and a stormwater management system integrated into a bioswale. The system will help direct

runoff from the building's roof and surrounding area toward rain gardens, reducing its impact on the city's stormwater collection system. **Full Story:** [Broadway World](#) (6/16)

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RESEARCH, INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

MIT device pulls drinking water from air without power

Engineers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have developed an atmospheric water harvester that captures water vapor from the air and produces safe drinking water without a power source. The window-sized device, made from a hydrogel material, was tested in California's Death Valley and produced up to 160 milliliters of water per day, even in low humidity. The system could be scaled to supply households in arid regions. **Full Story:** [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#)

(6/11)

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WORKFORCE

7 actionable ways to become a likeable leader



You can have the best technical leadership skills in the world, but if your teams don't like you, it could hinder your effectiveness, writes executive coach Joel Garfinkle, who recommends adopting a warm, friendly tone, looking for common interests with others, following through on promises and recognizing the contributions of your team members. "Giving credit where it's due shows generosity, boosts morale and makes you more likeable," Garfinkle notes.

(Morsa Images/Getty Images)

Full Story: [SmartBrief/Leadership](#) (6/16)

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QUESTION OF THE DAY

When was chlorine first widely used for disinfection in public water supplies in the United States?

☐ 1850

☐ 1908

☐ 1932

TODAY AT WEF

New anaerobic codigestion manual out now



Get the latest information on feedstock evaluation, system design, operations and biogas utilization to help utilities implement or enhance anaerobic codigestion. Ideal for engineers, operators and managers focused on energy recovery and efficiency. [Learn more and download the first chapter for free.](#)

(WEF)

Study circularity in Japan with WEF



WEF is covering USD \$4,150 in tuition for five WEF members to travel to Japan for a deep-dive tour of circular innovation! Led by the Japan Sewage Works Association, this immersive experience will explore how Japan's water sector transforms waste into value with advanced reuse systems, eco-industrial zones and regenerative community models. [Get details and apply for your scholarship by June 27.](#)

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