

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 2, 2008

For more information, contact:

Kathryn Ruckman, Communications
Manager, 303.347.6116,
kruckman@awwarf.org

AwwaRF Announces Fast-Track Study on Potential Effects of Underground Carbon Sequestration on Groundwater Resources

DENVER — The Awwa Research Foundation (AwwaRF), the nation's leading drinking water research organization, announced a new study to investigate the potential effect of underground carbon sequestration on groundwater resources.

Currently undergoing examination as a method for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, carbon sequestration entails separating carbon dioxide (CO₂) from other emissions and injecting it into deep, underground natural storage areas such as oil and gas reservoirs, saline aquifers, or coal seams. Greenhouse gas emissions are a major contributor to global climate change.

The AwwaRF-sponsored project is timed to be funded before publication this summer by the Environmental Protection Agency of draft proposed regulations for a related rule. The study will look specifically at the potential impacts that carbon sequestration may have on underground water sources. AwwaRF is now accepting proposals for the project from researchers. [Request for proposals #4203 \(PDF\)](#) has been announced on the AwwaRF Web site. The project is part of AwwaRF's Rapid Response Research Program, a mechanism through which AwwaRF responds quickly to urgent, immediate, or unforeseen research needs of the drinking water community.

“Previous and ongoing research on carbon sequestration largely focuses on long-term efficiency for containing carbon emissions, without consideration of potential impacts on the water supply,” said Robert C. Renner, AwwaRF executive director. “CO₂ injected into underground formations could potentially leak into overlying water supplies, with associated implications for groundwater quality, or it may displace fresh water with saline water in aquifers. It’s very important for carbon sequestration practitioners and regulators to consider potential impacts on groundwater supplies as the technology moves forward.”

The need for the research is all the more urgent because the EPA will propose regulations in the summer of 2008 for permitting full-scale carbon sequestration projects. Many industries that produce greenhouse gases view carbon sequestration as the leading technology for minimizing greenhouse gas emissions. Drinking water utilities may not yet be aware of the regulation’s current development or understand the potential implications of carbon sequestration for groundwater supplies.

The timing of EPA’s proposed regulation precludes conducting a full-scale study to understand potential impacts on groundwater supplies and inform the rulemaking process, Renner said. Therefore, through the AwwaRF fast-track project, the selected research team will examine and summarize potential impacts of carbon sequestration technology based on currently available information before the EPA rule is proposed.

The project will continue after the rule is proposed with an assembled panel of experts that will examine the implications of the rule for underground water supplies, identify critical knowledge gaps and needs, and develop a research agenda to address those needs. The research agenda will become part of the AwwaRF-sponsored program of research for drinking water suppliers.

About the Awwa Research Foundation (AwwaRF)

The Awwa Research Foundation (AwwaRF) is a member-supported, international, nonprofit organization that sponsors research to enable water utilities, public health agencies, and other professionals to provide safe and affordable drinking water to the public. With more than 900

subscriber members in the U.S. and abroad, AwwaRF has funded and managed more than 1,000 projects. More information on the Awwa Research Foundation is available at www.AwwaRF.org

###