

WQRF

**Water Quality
Research Foundation**

IMPACT REPORT

2025

Advancing knowledge and the science of high-quality, sustainable water

POWERED BY PURPOSE

WQRF is proud to share a report that reflects the purpose and dedication driving our mission forward. Research is being initiated and completed at a faster rate than ever, even as our outreach efforts expand. Nine projects were underway in 2025 – an 80% increase over 2024 – illustrating our rapid acceleration.



“I’m excited to see the progress that WQRF has made over the last few years. This compelling research will benefit the industry and consumers for many years to come. Additionally, our new focus on outreach will get these valuable research results in the hands of regulators, law makers, consumers, and product users across the country.”

D. Samuel Karge, President of A. O. Smith North America Water Treatment; Incoming WQRF President

WQRF is carrying that momentum forward with the launch of new shareable content, designed to deliver key research results directly to WQA members and equip dealers with actionable resources (see image on right).

WQRF | Water Quality Research Foundation

See the top 3 reasons Americans are getting water treatment systems*

- Soften their water,** reducing residue and scale
- Improve the taste and smell** of their water
- Add a final barrier** of protection against contaminants

*WQRF, "Emerging Water Contaminants Consumer Study," 2022.

The 2026 budget dedicates 26% of the Next Wave Campaign funds to project work, marking our most ambitious outreach investment yet. Guided by a strategic plan that balances “mountains”—long-term research that shapes the future—with “hills”— projects that deliver immediate value—we are building sustained trajectory that will carry the industry we serve confidently forward.

OUTCOMES IN ACTION



SAVE TIME & MONEY ON PFAS CERTIFICATION

- Validation of PFBA as a surrogate for PFAS certification testing starting in Spring 2026
- Collaboration with NSF to aid adoption of surrogate in NSF/ANSI standards

MITIGATE DISPOSAL CONCERNS OF PFAS TREATMENT MEDIA



- Evaluated behavior of PFAS in end-of-life media under simulated landfill conditions
- The >98% PFAS retention rates demonstrate that activated carbon, RO, and ion exchange media remove PFAS from water and keep them out of the environment

POSITION POU/POE AS SOLUTIONS FOR SMALL PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM COMPLIANCE

- Validated POU/E as a competitive alternative to costly centralized system upgrades
- Using data to overcome known barriers and propose a revised regulatory regime to advance adoption of POU/E as permanent solutions for small systems

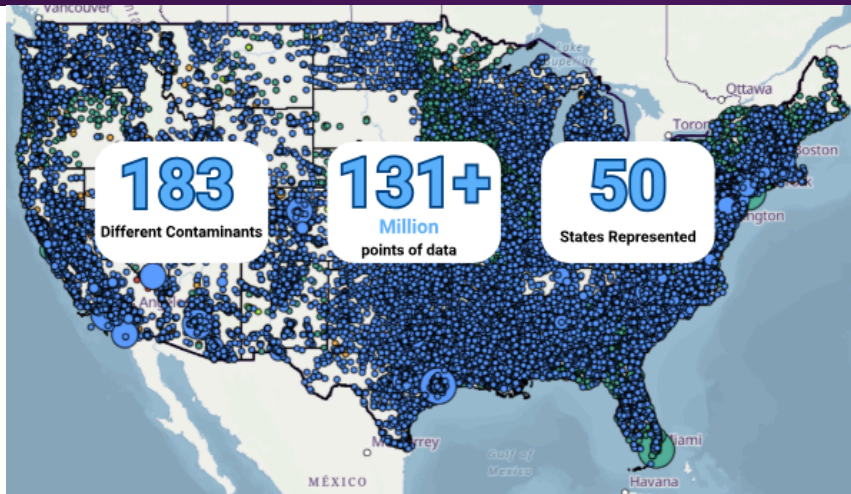


QUANTIFY THE SAVINGS FROM SOFTENING WATER

- WQRF is expanding upon the Soft Water Benefits Studies to scientifically reaffirm the cost savings and energy savings with modern appliances and detergent formulations



THE DATA ADVANTAGE



The Leading Drinking Water Database in the US

TRUSTED DATA

- Regulated & emerging contaminants
- Hardness, iron, and other taste/odor concerns
- Historical & current trends: 1972 - 2023
- **COMING SOON:** data through 2025



SEARCH BY ZIP CODE
FOR CONTAMINANTS
AT [WQRF.ORG/MAP20](https://www.wqrf.org/map20)

ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

- Gain insights into **finished water** - what consumers and end users actually receive
- Pinpoint regions with the greatest need to **optimize marketing** efforts
- Focus **R&D investments** toward the most pressing water quality challenges
- Identify **opportunities with utilities** and/or municipalities
- Strengthen **customer confidence** with insights backed by research

Questions about data licensing can be directed to foundation@wqrf.org

ENGAGEMENT DRIVERS

INDUSTRY-WIDE

- [Student Research Posters](#) — a chart-topper for engagement, demonstrating the industry’s vested interest in tomorrow’s talent
- PFAS: Retention on Spent Treatment Media — a cross-audience powerhouse, with widespread attendance at [this webinar](#) showcasing our latest research
- [Soft Water: A Free Toolkit](#) — WQA members flocked to WQRF’s ready-to-use social media graphics and calculator, which demonstrate the benefits of softening water



DEALERS

[Our one-minute educational videos](#) took center stage, helping dealers spark meaningful conversations with consumers about how well-maintained softeners can support septic system performance.

MANUFACTURERS

A standout moment for manufacturers was their high engagement with WQRF’s [counterfeit filter education](#), underscoring a shared priority to protect consumers.



BY THE NUMBERS

131,000,000

datapoints tracking public water supplies

405

hours volunteered

20% increase from 2024

201

Walk for Water supporters

191% increase from 2024

84

volunteer group meetings

58% increase from 2024

57

companies contributing to the Next Wave Campaign

WQRF

The Next Wave Campaign

Expanding knowledge through research and outreach

"You have no idea how important your voice is, how important you are to all of us, and how important your funding is to help us finally prove what our products and professionals can do."



Richard Mest, WQA/WQRF Strategic Affairs Officer

ICON CIRCLE



FOUNDER CIRCLE



LEGACY CIRCLE



RESEARCH BY TOPIC

PROJECT	WATER SOFTENING	POU/POE EFFICACY	POU/POE FOR SDWA COMPLIANCE	STATE-OF-THE-SCIENCE / PUBLIC AWARENESS
SOFTENED WATER BENEFITS	✓			✓
REDUCED EFFLUENT CHLORIDE	✓		✓	
SOFTENER EFFECTS ON SEPTIC	✓			
BOIL WATER NOTICES		✓		
POU PATHOGEN SURVEY		✓		
PREDICTIVE MODELING: DRINKING WATER CRISES		✓		✓
CONTAMINANT OCCURRENCE MAP & DATABASE*		✓		✓
COST-BENEFIT OF POU DEVICES		✓		
EMERGING CONTAMINANT REMOVAL BY RO & ACTIVATED CARBON		✓		✓
COUNTERFEIT FRIDGE FILTERS		✓		
PFAS RETENTION*		✓		✓
PFAS SURROGATE - PHASE I		✓		
CASE STUDIES FOR POU/POE FOR COMPLIANCE			✓	
A SUSTAINABILITY COMPARISON OF APPROACHES FOR COMPLIANCE			✓	
EMERGING CONTAMINANTS CONSUMER STUDY				✓

*ONGOING STUDY

WQRF | Water Quality Research Foundation

A 501(c)(3) non-profit foundation



foundation@wqrf.org



WQRF.org



2375 Cabot Drive Lisle, Illinois 60532