

Safe Drinking Water Act 50th Anniversary Toolkit:

What's Your Water Story?

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Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) celebrates 50 years of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). Before SDWA, drinking water in some communities carried dangerous diseases and contaminants, like pesticides or hazardous waste. But in the 50 years since SDWA was passed, over 92% of the population supplied by community water systems receives drinking water that meets all health-based standards all of the time. To amplify this milestone and drive the next 50 years of safe drinking water progress, join us in sharing a water story from you or a representative of your organization.

Below are key messages, authored by U.S. EPA, that can be incorporated in your SDWA celebration.

Key Messages:

(Credit: EPA)

- This year we celebrate 50 years of incredible progress in improving the availability of safe drinking water.
- SDWA has been a pillar of water resources engineering, utility management, and public health now for half a century. But it wasn't always this way.
 - Between 1961 and 1970, officials documented over 46,000 cases of waterborne hepatitis, salmonellosis, and gastroenteritis—diseases caused by chlorine-resistant pathogens.
 - Created in 1974, the Safe Drinking Water Act protects public health and creates thriving communities by limiting the levels of contaminants in our drinking water.
- “Nothing is more essential to the life of every single American than clean air, pure food, and safe drinking water. There have been strong national programs to improve the quality of our air and the purity of our food. This bill will provide us with the protection we need for drinking water.” Statement by President Gerald R. Ford at the signing of the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974.
- The Act not only protects our drinking water, but many of our sources of drinking water – like reservoirs, springs, and groundwater wells.
- There are many continuing and emerging challenges to providing safe drinking water, making it more imperative than ever that communities value and invest in it.
 - Our sources of drinking water (like groundwater, streams, rivers, springs, or lakes) are too often threatened by pollution or development.
 - Climate change is bringing warmer temperatures, sea level rise, stronger storms, more droughts, and changes to water chemistry. These pose challenges to protecting source water and drinking water infrastructure.

- Drinking water infrastructure requires regular maintenance, repairs, and replacement. EPA estimates that the United States has \$600 billion in drinking water infrastructure needs over the next 20 years.
- We must drive the next 50 years of safe and clean water progress through today's actions. Let's use this time to envision what the next 50 years of progress can and should look like.

For more background, please visit: www.epa.gov/sdwa. Below are examples of social media posts that could be shared with your constituents/audiences.

Examples of Potential Social Media Posts Courtesy of U.S. EPA:

Handles

- X: [@EPAwater](https://twitter.com/EPAwater)
- Facebook: [EPA Water](https://www.facebook.com/EPAWater)
- Instagram: [@epagov](https://www.instagram.com/epagov)
- LinkedIn: [US Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](https://www.linkedin.com/company/us-environmental-protection-agency)

Tags

- #SDWA50
- #SafeDrinkingWaterAct
- #SafeDrinkingWater
- #CleanWater
- #EPACleanWater
- #EPASDWA50

Example Messages

To be used with the respective U.S. EPA handle.

- The #SafeDrinkingWaterAct set the standard for how we protect drinking water in America.
- #SafeDrinkingWater is critical to our lives. From the moment we wake up in the morning and brew a cup of coffee, to the moment before bed when we brush our teeth, we need safe drinking water. #SDWA50
- #Water is life - our bodies are two-thirds water; humans can survive only three days without water. #SafeDrinkingWater.
- Each day, Americans drink more than 1 billion glasses of safe, clean tap #water because of the #SafeDrinkingWaterAct.
- Every day we rely on #CleanWater from our taps for cooking, washing, bathing to the ice maker on the refrigerator door.
- Clean drinking water is essential for keeping our economies running. Our schools, businesses, and communities require #SafeDrinkingWater to operate. #SDWA50
- 50 years later, the #SafeDrinkingWaterAct defines what is clean, safe drinking water, by setting limits on contaminants. What does #water mean to you? Share your story for #SDWA50.
- Let's use #SDWA50 as a time to envision what the next 50 years of progress can and should look like for #SafeDrinkingWater.

Prompts for Creating a Water Story

Consider answering the following questions in a narrative post to X, Facebook, LinkedIn and/or Instagram during your SDWA celebration.

- *Do you recall a time your thirst was quenched by water from a glass, a drinking water fountain, your home faucet or tap?*
- *When did you first realize the importance of safe drinking water?*
- *Why is safe drinking water important?*
- *Why does your organization care about safe drinking water?*
- *How have you been impacted by the Safe Drinking Water Act?*
- *What has been your role in implementing the Safe Drinking Water Act over the past 50 years?*
- *What does the future of safe drinking water look like to you?*

This [Perspectives Piece](#) by David Cash, EPA Region 1 Administrator, is a great example of what clean water means to him. Consider crafting a similar story as it relates to safe drinking water.

Example Water Story

Image: Image of person or organization the story relates to.

Caption: “Every day we rely on #CleanWater from our taps for cooking, washing, bathing and from the ice maker on the refrigerator door. [Insert 1-2 sentences on the moment you first realized the importance of safe drinking water]. [Insert 1-2 sentences on the organization’s role in implementing safe drinking water]. The #SafeDrinkingWaterAct is a big part of this, for it set the standard for how we protect water in America. Let’s use #SDWA50 as a time to envision what the next 50 years of progress can and should look like for #SafeDrinkingWater.”

The prompts in the caption can vary depending on the person or organization posting. They can be mix and matched.

Attachments

The following attachments are provided on the [SDWA 50 website](#).

- Example Social Media Posts
- Templates
- Graphics
- Photos

Photos Courtesy of U.S. EPA:



Other Links:

- [EPA SDWA Page](#)
- [EPA Environmental Milestones and Timeline](#)
- [EPA Ground Water and Drinking Water Page](#)
- [EPA Safe Drinking Water PFAS Page](#)
- [EPA Lead and Copper Rule Improvements Page](#)
- [EPA Water Infrastructure Page](#)

- [EPA Water TA Page](#)