



Contact: Nathalie Bowers  
(850) 476-5110 ext. 2115  
nbowers@ecua.org

## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Emerald Coast Utilities Authority Water is Safe**

ECUA Executive Director says EWG's Report is Misleading

**PENSACOLA**—A statement from Emerald Coast Utilities Authority (ECUA) Executive Director, Stephen Sorrell:

“We have looked at the report from the Environmental Working Group (EWG) very closely. Any allegations about our water quality we take very, very seriously. In looking deeply into the report we frankly found inconsistencies and errors. We are certain we can legitimately dispute the overstated claims of the EWG concerning our water quality.

“I’m learning more and more every day, and I know our water is outstanding, meeting or exceeding every standards demanded by federal and state regulatory agencies. In fact, EWG ‘s report clearly states the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued no violations to the ECUA during the five-year period in question.

“The more I dissect the report, the more I believe EWG interpreted the data and published their report to support a preconceived agenda. It is clear they want to force the EPA to adopt stricter standards for drinking water. Our city, Pensacola, and the ECUA’s water system are unintended casualties of the effort.

“The EWG report is quite interesting in that, if read closely their argument is actually negated. They simply did a very shoddy and unscientific comparison to further their agenda. Data, as always can be made to say anything. In order to find the truth I urge all our citizens to take a look at the report’s summary, which I will briefly describe.

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“The EWG report’s summary indicates ECUA did 74,897 test samples over a five year period and in those tests 45 different impurities were found. (EWG calls them contaminants, even though they are not regulated.) At the same time, they noted in the summary, and only in the summary, that during the five years they surveyed EPA did not issue a single violation to ECUA. I believe this fact is telling and I believe EWG intentionally underplayed it.

“To further our concern, EWG’s report states that 420 was the national average for water quality tests conducted by the 100 water companies in the five year period surveyed. During that same period ECUA water was tested almost 75,000 times, exceeding the national average by 178 times. This is a clear illustration of how vigilant ECUA is regarding the monitoring of our water quality. EWG also indicates the national average for impurities are eight in that average of 420 tests. Again, the 45 impurities they listed in our water, usually found in trace amounts, came from almost 75,000 tests of water samples. With ECUA’s water being tested vastly more frequently and meeting or exceeding all federal and state water quality standards on every single occasion, I believe it is clear ECUA’s water is far cleaner than virtually every other system surveyed.

“It also appears that in making their determinations the EWG has apparently adopted their own health guidelines, even though they have no authority to do so, and have no regulatory powers. ECUA’s water satisfies every single EPA and Florida Department of Environmental Protection regulation. Actually in Florida, our regulations are much stricter than those established by the EPA. We meet or exceed all of them.

“The EWG’s suspect methodology was to take data from large water systems in the U.S. and then list the number of impurities (according to them) without regard for the actual quantities in the water. If an impurity showed up once or twice in almost 75,000 testing and then in trace amounts, EWG still counted it as a contaminant in the water. This is a fatal flaw in their work.

“If you take a scrupulous, scientifically based comparative look at the data from the water systems in Texas and Rhode Island EWG listed as the best in the country, our water system compares very favorably.

“It also is of concern that on EWG’s website they recommend the purchasing of

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household water filters and directs consumers to their online `buyer's guide' to help them determine which filtration system to buy. At the same time, EWG's website encourages the purchasing of systems from an online retailer who then gives EWG a portion of the profits. I could not help but see this as a conflict of interest from a supposedly objective scientific organization.

"I encourage ECUA customers to read the Authority's 2008 Water Quality Report, which was mailed to each residence last June, and is available online at [www.ecua.org](http://www.ecua.org) for an accurate statement of the quality of our water. The 2009 ECUA Water Quality Report, incorporating 2009 testing data, will be prepared and mailed in early 2010.

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