



Rural Drinking Water

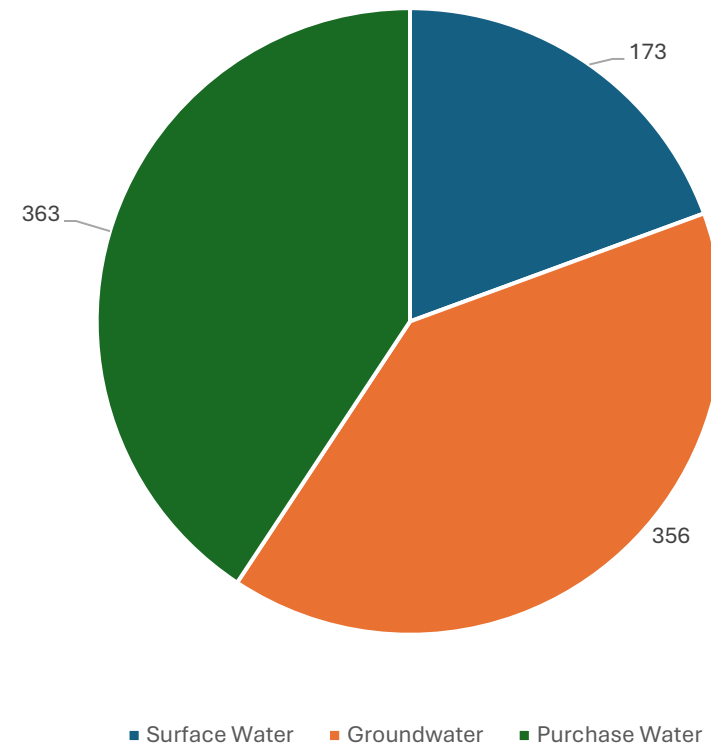


Mark Stasyszen, PE
Drinking Water Administrator

Public Water Supplies (PWS) in Oklahoma

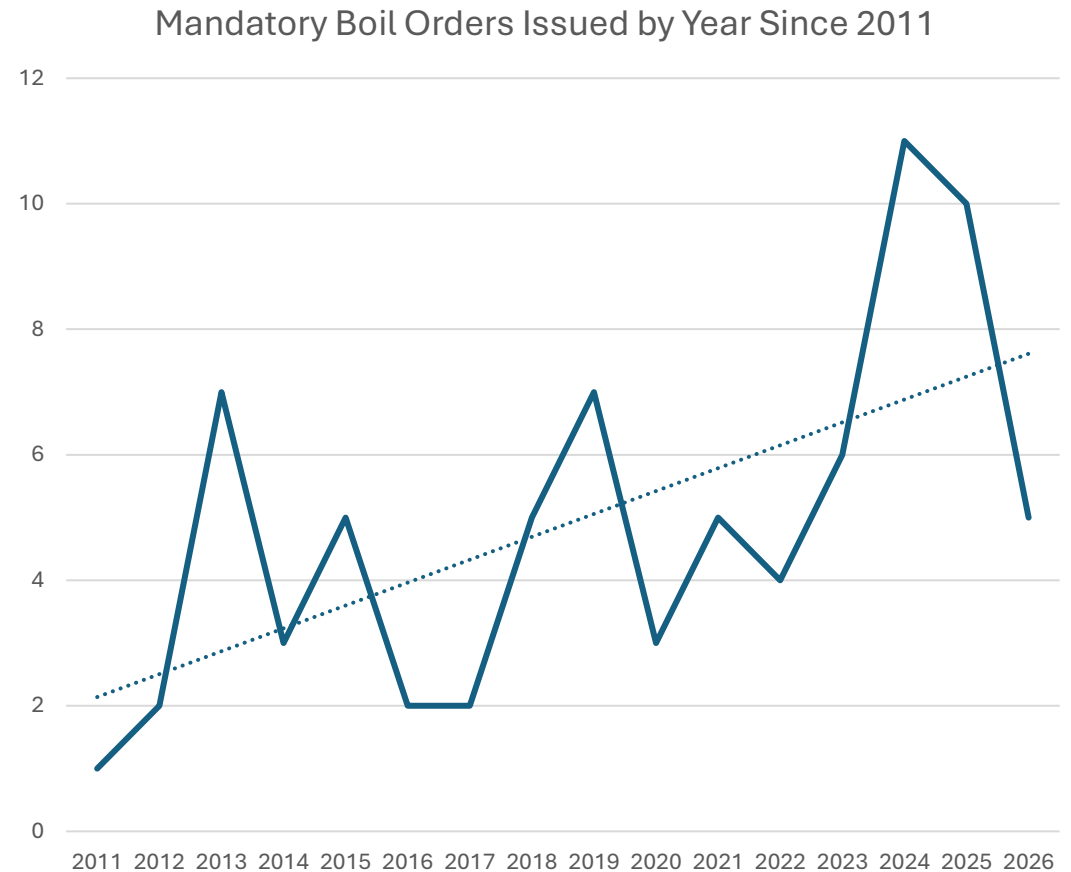
- Oklahoma has **1,265** public water supply systems
 - **892** of these serve communities, including cities, towns, and rural water districts
 - The majority serve less than 3,300 and **361 or 40%** serve populations of 500 or less.

Number of Community PWSs by Water Sources

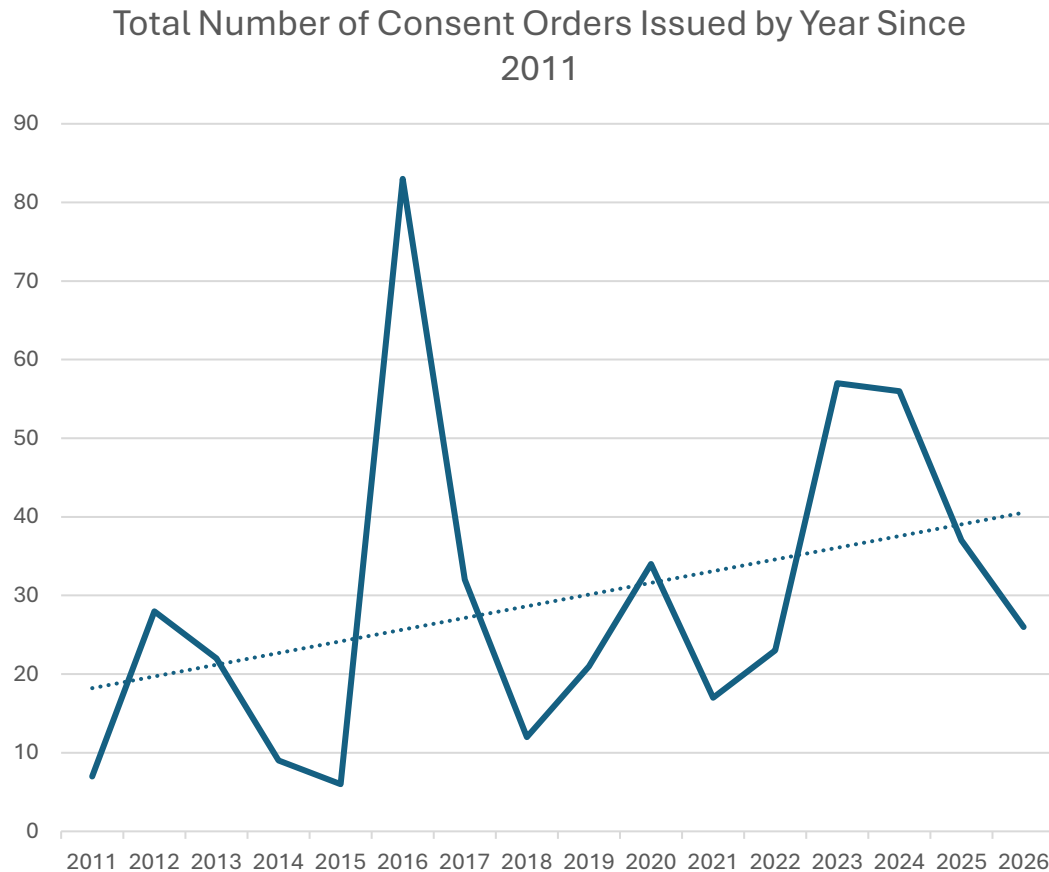


PWS Trends

- The frequency of Boil Orders has increased over the past 15 years.
- This does not include precautionary boil advisories.
 - 48 precautionary boil advisories were issued in 2025.



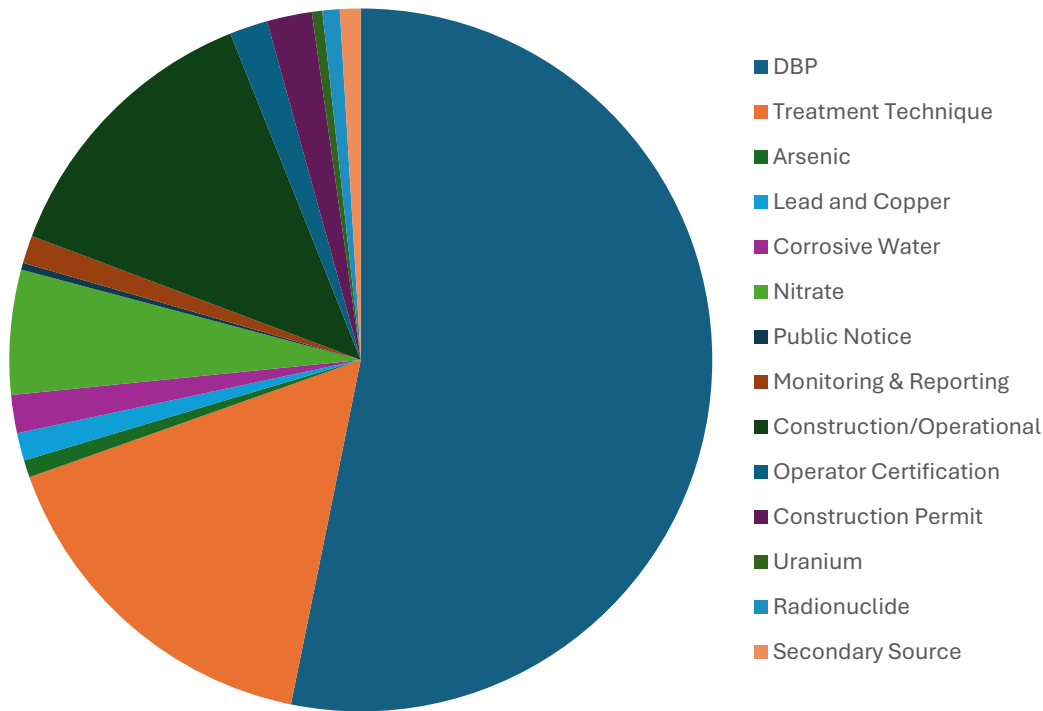
PWS Trends



- The number of long-term compliance issues has also increased over the same time span.
- This is represented by the number of Consent Orders agreed to by DEQ and PWS systems each year.

PWS Trends

Distribution of Consent Orders by Compliance Issue



- Unfortunately, compliance issues are often not always related to customer concerns.
- The most frequent complaints are for low water pressure or no service; discolored or dirty water; and taste and odor.
- These are secondary standards and although important from a customer perspective, do not have enforceable standards.



Rural drinking water systems are seemingly struggling.

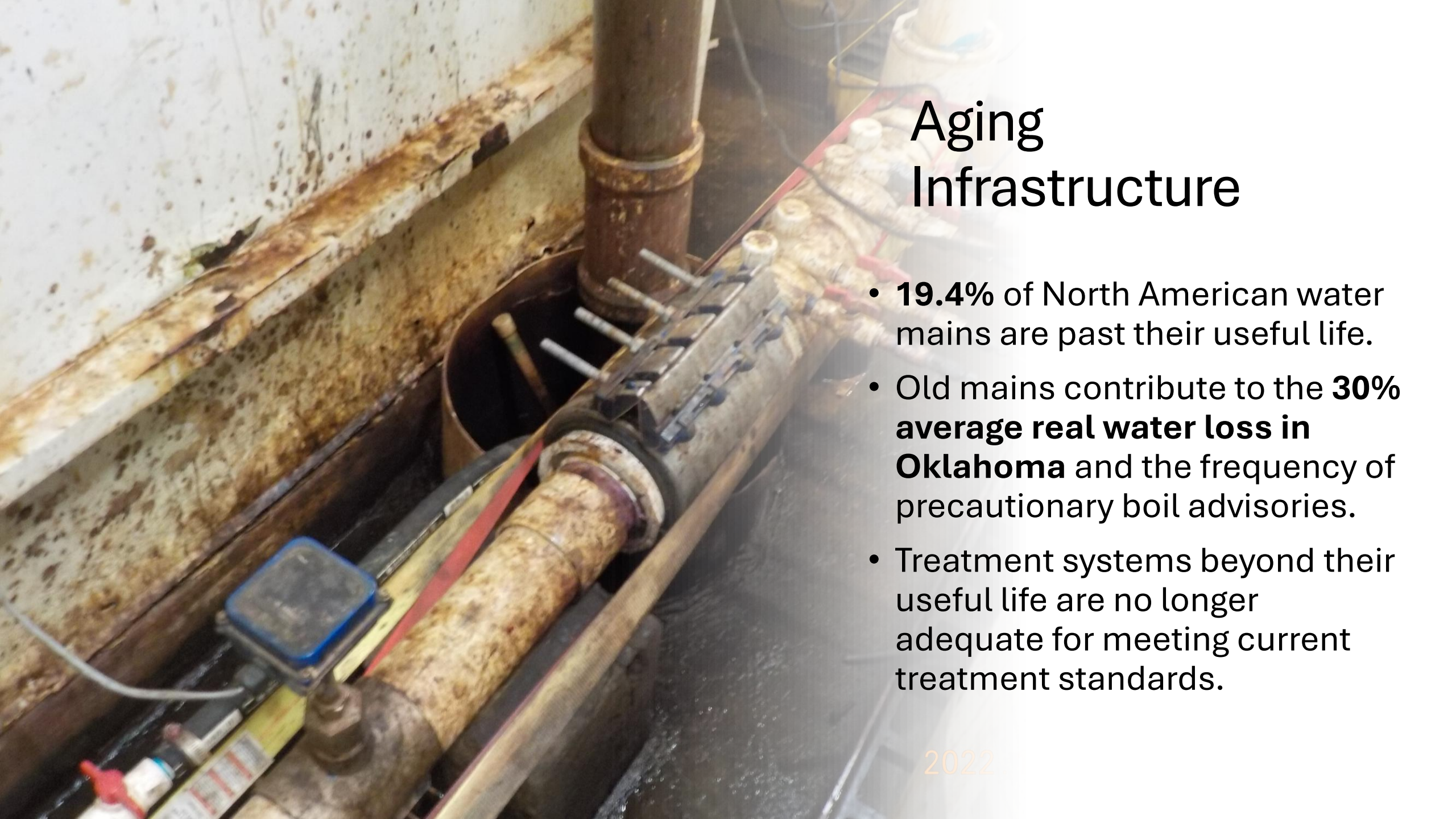


Why?

A photograph of a water treatment facility. In the center is a large, vertical, blue cylindrical tank with some peeling paint. To its left is a black barrel with some equipment on top. To its right are blue pipes and valves. The background shows a concrete wall and windows.

New Federal Regulations

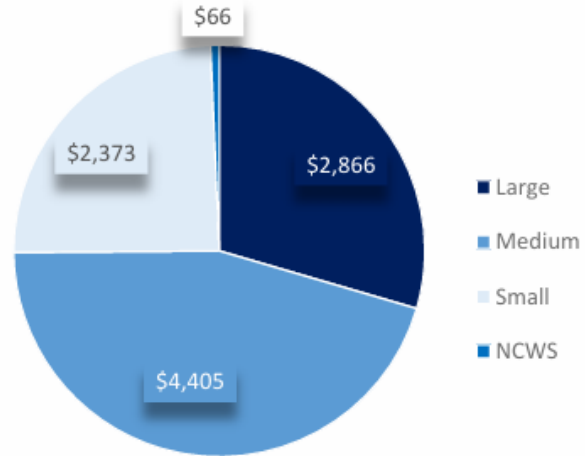
- Three new Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) Rules have compliance dates in 2027
 - CCR3
 - PFAS
 - LCRI
- Two of these three rules have been subject to multiple revisions or planned revisions in the past few years, making long term planning difficult.
- More rules and planned revisions are underway, despite Oklahoma PWS systems continuing to struggle with existing federal requirements, especially DBPs and Nitrates.



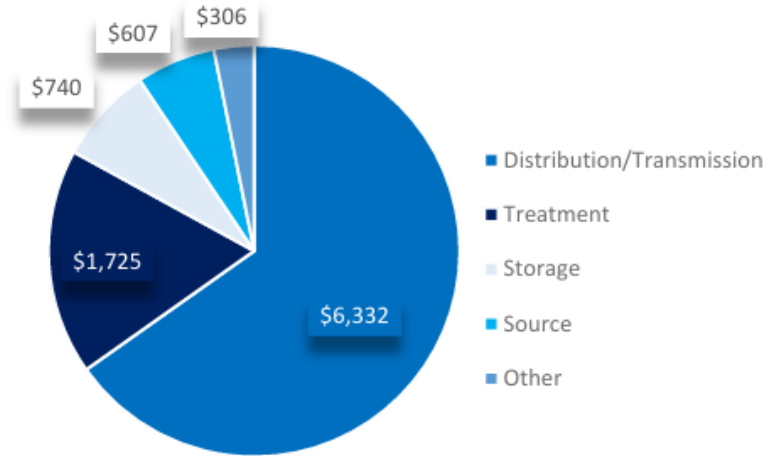
Aging Infrastructure

- **19.4%** of North American water mains are past their useful life.
- Old mains contribute to the **30% average real water loss in Oklahoma** and the frequency of precautionary boil advisories.
- Treatment systems beyond their useful life are no longer adequate for meeting current treatment standards.

Oklahoma Total Need by System Size
(in millions; January 2021 dollars)



Oklahoma Total Need by Project Category
(in millions; January 2021 dollars)



Funding Gaps

- The 7th DWINSA (2021) found a **\$9.7 billion**, 20-year need.
 - The burden is greater for smaller PWS systems on a per household basis (**\$543 vs \$240**).
- “Grant” funding is still here but is generally less available.
- Only **43%** of PWS systems report that their rates are sufficient to cover their costs.

Workforce and Other Factors

- Difficulty Finding and Keeping Operators
 - Operators earn less than plumbers and electricians (\$22.06 vs \$27.87 & \$29.33).
 - Oklahoma operators earn less than the national average (\$26.78).
 - 1/3 of operators are within 10 years of retirement.
- Board knowledge, engagement, and support
- Limited compliance options for purchase water systems
- Balancing new and existing customer needs and demands
- Consumer expectations are even higher
 - Detection of contaminants at ppt vs ppm or ppb
 - Safe vs Pure



Possible Solutions

- Direct funding support for PWS systems
- Funding support and expansion of TA programs
- Increased Workforce Development
- Support Board Development and Oversight
- Improve Wholesale and Purchase System Relations
- Regionalization and Consolidation
- Water Rate Adjustment, Protection, and Support
- Compliance with Secondary Standards (Mn, Fe, etc.)



After Exterior coating renovations



Before Exterior coating renovations

Questions?

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