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From: POLITICO Pro Energy Whiteboard
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Subject: Energy and Commerce sends bipartisan drinking water bill to the floor

By Annie Snider

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The House Energy and Commerce Committee added provisions relating to security and emerging contaminants to a bipartisan drinking water measure before sending it to the full House for consideration by voice vote.

The amendment to H.R. 3387 (115), the first major update to the Safe Drinking Water Act in two decades, tackles concerns about new or newly understood contaminants appearing in tap water by requiring utilities to monitor for such "emerging contaminants" so long as funding and laboratory capacity is available.

The amendment also requires water systems to develop emergency response plans addressing their vulnerability to natural disasters and terrorism, and it creates an EPA grant program to help utilities improve their resiliency.

And the committee added provisions requiring water systems to make their reports to consumers more understandable, and encouraging states and EPA to look at whether restructuring or consolidation could help water systems with long-running problems.

The overall measure tackles issues raised in the wake of the lead crisis in Flint, Mich., and represents one of the first bipartisan infrastructure measures to gain traction under the Trump administration.

WHAT'S NEXT: The bill has broad support and should be able to easily pass the House, although it remains to be seen when it would get a vote. Companion legislation has yet to be introduced in the Senate.

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