

# ROUNDTABLE RECAP

## DRINKING WATER QUALITY IN MISSOURI

the panelists:



**Dr. Maria Fidalgo**  
Associate Professor,  
MU Engineering



**Charles Miller, JD**  
Policy Manager, MO  
Confluence Waterkeeper



**Deborah Rice-Carter**  
Programs & Outreach  
Associate, A Red Circle



**Jeff Pinson**  
Water Protection  
Program, MO DNR

### Highlights

Missouri drinking water derives from both surface water (rivers and lakes) and groundwater. **The Missouri River is most important water source for MO's drinking water, supplying roughly half the state.**

- Public water is purified through a series of filters and chemical treatment before being delivered to your tap; water quality is regulated by the federal government and is monitored and enforced by the state (MO DNR).
- Missouri has high quality water, but faces some challenges relating to contaminants including pesticides, pharmaceuticals, fecal coliform, heavy metals, PFAS and microplastics
- We are still developing the means to detect, monitor and treat for emerging contaminants like PFAS ('forever chemicals') and microplastics.
- Health impacts of chronic exposure to contaminated water can include higher likelihood of cancers, disruptions in the endocrine systems, fertility issues, cognitive impairments, and others.
- Water challenges vary by region of state:
  - Many urban areas still have lead service lines in use which are being treated to reduce the corrosion of pipes; MO DNR is developing a lead service line inventory to map the existing lines and make plans for replacement.
  - Rural areas can be hamstrung by expensive water purification systems; private wells are not protected under standards
- Regulations for groundwater, surface water and drinking water are varied despite these systems being interconnected. A more stringent and redundant legal framework that looks at water systems holistically may be one concrete step to improve water quality in the state.

### Resources

- The federal [Safe Drinking Water Act](#) outlines national drinking water standards.
- [Consumer Confidence Reports](#) provide water testing results over time by region of the U.S. Enter your zip code on EPA's website to see look at your water quality results.
  - If you are on a private well, request a [well water test kit](#) through MO Health & Senior Services.
- See the [common contaminants of Missouri's water quality](#).
- The EPA published [strategy guide for lead service line replacement](#), which provides information about grants and other resources to help individuals and municipalities replace lead lines.
  - Follow the progress of MO DNR's [lead service line inventory](#).
  - A 2022 Missouri law allocates more funds for lead testing and filtration in school drinking water.
- Dr. Fidalgo is developing at-home screening tools and new processes for filtering emerging contaminants - check out [Dr. Fidalgo's research](#) here.
- The [Missouri Water Center](#) is an interdisciplinary research group through the University of Missouri that uses science to address water-related challenges across the state.

*Although water quality challenges are big,  
there is hope because science and technology  
are advancing rapidly.*

- Dr. Fidalgo

Roundtable discussion hosted by MOST  
Policy Initiative on **December 13, 2022**

Watch the  
recording  
here:

