**Press Release: Occurrence of Legionella spp. in Drinking Water Distribution Systems**

A close-up of a spider

Description automatically generated with medium confidenceDr. Water Consulting, LLC is pleased to announce that along with co-investigators Dr. Jennifer Clancy and Dr. Timothy Bartrand of the Environmental Science Policy and Research Institute (ESPRI), a $206,000 research grant was awarded from The Water Research Foundation. The total project value is $438,121 and includes $231,976 of in-kind contributions.

The project, entitled “Occurrence of Legionella spp. in Drinking Water Distribution Systems” (project 5156) will start in May 2022 with a virtual workshop including EPA, CDC, State regulators and health departments, utilities, universities and other agencies to review protocols for responding to detections of *Legionella pneumophila* in drinking water distribution systems.

The objective the study is to determine the relationship between *L. pneumophila* occurrence/ concentration, the level/type of disinfectant residual in distribution systems and other system features (system size, source type etc.). The USEPA is revising the requirements for distribution system disinfectant residuals and the results of this study will be critical in the value that is eventually set. To achieve this objective, we are looking to analyze 3600 samples from 50 water utilities across the country. The grant will provide free Legiolert kits to participating utilities so that the utilities can process three samples per week for about 12 weeks during periods of warm water (>18 C). The testing will be done during the summers of 2022 and 2023. The protocol for Legiolert is easy to use (similar to a Colilert test). The project will provide training and initial QA/QC testing.

In addition, a limited number of samples will be analyzed by the standard ISO 11731 culture assay for *Legionella* spp. and a commercially available viability qPCR test. All positive isolates will be serotypes and identified by MALDI-TOF-MS and subjected to whole genome sequencing.

Utilities interested in participation in the project can contact Dr. Mark LeChevallier at [lechevallier1@comcast.net](mailto:lechevallier1@comcast.net).

About Dr. Water Consulting. LLC

Dr. Mark LeChevallier is the principal and manager of Dr. Water Consulting LLC, a part-time consulting business, after retiring from American Water at the beginning of 2018. Dr. LeChevallier received his Bachelor of Science and Master’s degrees in Microbiology from Oregon State University, and his Ph.D. in Microbiology from Montana State University. Dr. LeChevallier currently serves on the USEPA Science Advisory Board, the Water Science & Technology Board for the National Academy of Science and was a member of the NAS *Legionella* workgroup. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology. See <https://drwaterconsulting.com/>

About the Environmental Science Policy and Research Institute (ESPRI)

ESPRI - The Environmental Science, Policy and Research Institute - is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to public health protection, water conservation and energy conservation. Our specialty is water quality and our focus is building water systems. See <https://esprinstitute.org/index.html>