

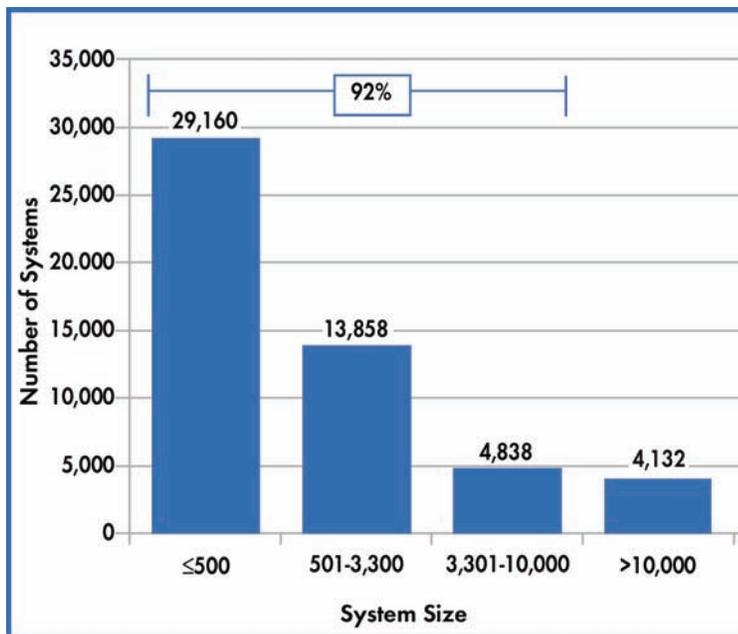


# Ergs, Joules & Such

## Notes on Energy Savings for the Rural Water Community and Maybe Others

**A**s you know, in the last few issues we've digressed from strict energy items to a discussion of key regulatory issues, some of which can impact energy use. I'm really going to digress this month and go over a totally different subject, Small System Demographics. This is not an energy topic, but there is a recent flurry of interest in it and you may get questions.

- ❖ First, EPA has just published a report, *National Characteristics of Drinking Water Systems Serving 10,000 or Fewer People*, which is available at [http://water.epa.gov/type/drink/pws/smallsystems/state\\_guidance.cfm#capacity](http://water.epa.gov/type/drink/pws/smallsystems/state_guidance.cfm#capacity)
- ❖ This report is based on 2006 – 2008 information and is at best, out of date, if not misleading. For example, it states:
  - Small systems .....only serve 18 percent of the total population served by community water systems (CWSs), and



According to EPA's report, *National Characteristics of Drinking Water Systems Serving 10,000 or Fewer People*, EPA determined that small systems (<10,000 population) serve only eighteen percent of the population but comprise ninety-two percent of the number of community water systems. National Rural Water's recent white paper, based on 2010 data from EPA, indicates that small systems serve twenty-six percent of the population.

- The number of systems serving more than 3,300 people increased. These changes are most likely due to states' restructuring efforts.

- ❖ Fortunately, NRWA has just completed a draft white paper, *Small Public Water Systems In The 21st Century* that uses more current USEPA SDWIS data from 2010. This evaluation shows:
  - Small systems serve on average twenty-six percent of the total population served by CWSs, and
  - In many states, the percentage is much higher – in eighteen states the percent served is thirty percent or above, ranging from thirty percent to seventy percent. Clearly, the “one-size-fits-all” approach badly misrepresents the situation here. In numerous states small systems are responsible for providing a significant fraction of the CWS water served and in some it's a majority fraction!
- ❖ Further, the NRWA report clearly shows that the average size of small systems is increasing and that some are becoming quite large, demonstrating their viability. It is much more likely that the increase in systems serving more than 10,000 people is due to system growth rather than restructuring.
- ❖ Finally, it seems clear to this author that the misconception that small systems are a problem and steps to decrease their numbers are desirable needs to change. **It is abundantly clear from EPA's own data that small systems play a vital, essential role in the provision of treated drinking water in this country and in numerous states they play a predominant role.**
- ❖ Watch for the *National Rural Water Magazine* for further discussion of these issues.

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