

Abstract Submission 1: 2009 New England Private Well Water Symposium

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Private Well Regulation in the Northeast: Local, Regional, and State Initiatives

After the successful implementation of the landmark New Jersey Private Well Testing Act in 2001, many county health agencies and the states of Rhode Island and North Carolina have initiated similar oversight programs to close the largest public health gap in the US - the lack of mandatory testing, disclosure, and mitigation of the drinking water supply of one-third of its residents. Most measures have restricted oversight to the registration and testing of new wells, but a growing number are designed to capture private well data with mandatory testing at the time of sale, including multi-family rental and commercial private wells.

After a brief review of the successes and problems of the NJ program - promoted as a “consumer notification” *non-regulatory* measure - this presentation surveys other initiatives including the RI *Private Drinking Water Testing Act* (2007), the evolution and rollout of private well testing in NC, and the rocky legislative fate of the NY *Private Well Testing Act*. Various county-level private well testing program requirements are examined (e.g., Dutchess, Rockland, and Suffolk Counties in NY and Bucks County, PA) along with local initiatives such as the innovative public health bylaws of numerous MA communities and move toward moratoria on increasingly popular irrigation wells. Recently proposed private well measures are discussed which address testing, withdrawal and safe-yield, or energy use such as new MA regulations governing geothermal wells which require more data and water quality testing than is required for most *potable* private wells.

A final assessment is made of how these innovative private well programs have promoted public health protection of homeowners and communities; improved well locational technique; have cut testing costs and tightened lab protocols; and significantly expedited regional and state groundwater modeling by providing economical yet accurate and valuable data points that help direct long-term groundwater planning and policy.

Kurt Tramposch MPH – is an environmental planner and 25-year advocate for residential and community health. He has researched private well regulation since 2003 and presented on the topic at NGWA, NEWWA, and UMass Water Resources conferences. In 1980's he founded and directed the *Center for Residential Health* and served on a MA-DEP steering committee for an innovative community toxics program. He served as vice-chair of the MDC Sudbury Reservoir Citizen's Advisory Committee, is currently member of the steering committee for the *SuAsCo River Watershed Council* and member of the Groundwater Committee of the *New England Water Works Association*.

After US Marine Corps duty and study at University of Pennsylvania, he graduated from Cornell (Philosophy – with environmental studies and psychology) and studied landscape architecture and planning at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. He received a Master of Public Health degree (environmental health) from Boston University in 1987. Kurt has resumed graduate studies over the past five years in water policy and management, environmental and health impact assessment, land use planning, and community sustainability at Tufts, Boston University, and Harvard. Member: *US Green Building Council; American Planning Association; American Public Health Association; Green Roofs for Healthy Cities; and the National Ground Water Association* which sponsored the *USDA Well Inspectors Program* he completed in 2007.
