



**American Water Works  
Association**

*Dedicated to the World's Most Important Resource®*

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Dear Colleagues and Friends,

In my role as president of AWWA, each day I'm amazed by the profound sense of duty and self-sacrifice exhibited by the water professionals around me. So in a sense, I'm not surprised by what we've witnessed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Put simply, the work AWWA members are doing during these uncertain times is saving lives. Let me take just a moment to thank you on behalf of your Association and Sections.

We think a lot during these difficult times about the heroic work of health professionals and first responders who place themselves in harm's way to keep us all healthy and safe – and we should. But given the essential nature of water service during a pandemic, the work all of you are accomplishing is no less valuable.

Consider that CDC's first piece of advice to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is to wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. Without safe water at the tap, this simple, but critical step to protect against COVID-19 would not be possible. Neither would it be possible to flush our toilets, an everyday convenience that prevents waterborne disease in our communities.

You've heard me before reference the water profession as a "vocation of distinction." In these difficult times, it is also a vocation of heroism.

Rarely seen but always on the job, you are a quiet army protecting our communities in ways they do not fully understand. Whether you are a distribution operator repairing a broken water main in frigid temperatures, or a chemist assuring the community water supply is safe to drink, or a wastewater worker freeing a clogged sewer system, or a customer service representative helping a concerned citizen with a difficult question, or a technology provider developing solutions that make our magnificent water systems even better – you are all essential in keeping our communities safe and healthy.

If you're like me, you were probably unsettled by the reports of people rushing for bottled water at the outset of the pandemic. Families struggling to pay bills and uncertain about future employment should have confidence that their tap water is safe and reliable – at a tiny fraction of what they would pay for bottled water. No amount of bottled water -- or hand sanitizer for that matter -- can replace the amazing public health benefits your work provides.

Several years ago, then AWWA President Craig Woolard observed that water professionals are not greeted with marching bands as they embark on their work each day. But I hope you realize that you deserve that kind of recognition.

Thank you for your commitment to your communities, your dedication to public health and your spirit of self-sacrifice. I am so proud to be your president.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jim Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jim" and last name "Williams" clearly distinguishable.

Jim Williams  
AWWA President