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3.29.23

The Importance of the Water Industry

Having clean water is a vital part of life on earth. “Our bodies are made up of 70% water” is a saying that has been passed around since middle school for many people. Through that statistic, many individuals may be able to tell you a surface-level description of how crucial the water industry and clean water is. Clean water benefits the environment, economy, and is vital for human health.

Clean water benefits the environment. As a society, we must keep our bodies of water clean, and provide our ecosystems with clean water. When bodies of water are contaminated, it affects the whole ecosystem. According to <https://www.nrdc.org>, “These contaminants are toxic to aquatic life - most often reducing an organism’s life span and ability to reproduce - and make their way up the food chain as predator eats prey.” Ultimately, when bodies of water are contaminated, those contaminants will make it into the food we eat.

There are four main areas that the U.S Environmental Protection Agency has recognized where contaminated water affects the economy: the costs of treating drinking water, losses on tourism, damage to commercial fishing and shellfish harvests, and lower real estate values. Contaminated water causes water treatment costs to rise. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, “Nitrates and algal blooms in drinking water sources can drastically increase treatment costs. For example, nitrate-removal systems in Minnesota caused supply costs to rise from 5-10 cents per 1000 gallons to over \$4 per 1000 gallons.”

The Environment Protection Agency reports that the average American consumes 1 to 2 liters of water per day, so it is essential that they are drinking clean water. Unsafe levels of water contaminants can cause a number of health effects such as gastrointestinal illnesses, nervous system or reproductive effects, and chronic diseases such as cancer. How can we determine if a contaminant will lead to major health effects? We must look at these factors: the type of contaminant, its concentration in the water, individual susceptibility, the amount of water consumed, and the duration of exposure in order to determine if a contaminant will lead to major health effects.

As you can see, the water industry and having clean water is vital to our survival as humans. We must prioritize having high standards for water quality. Should we choose to be indifferent to water quality and the water industry, we will see a rise in sickness, unstable environments and a struggling economy. The water industry is an incredibly important industry that does not always get the recognition it deserves.