

# TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy  
December 6, 2016

## Pump It Up! A Tale of Two Holes

Did people listen to [Elvis Costello's](#) advice back in 1978? Or [Joe Budden](#) in 2013? Like so many prophets, their admonition to Pump It Up was misunderstood or ignored, until now. In Suffolk, Virginia, [two holes are being drilled](#) that may help slow the rate at which the Hampton Roads area is sinking. One hole is being drilled by the Hampton Roads Sanitation District that will allow it to inject treated waste water thousands of feet underground. The other hole is being drilled by the U.S. Geological Survey so it can install an [extensometer](#) that can measure whether the water injected by the HRSD has any effect on the region's subsiding soils. Will it work or make a difference? Too soon to tell. Can other subsiding places (looking at you [New Orleans](#)) learn from this. Why not? This much is already clear though, if you don't look and don't measure you can't know.

## New Orleans Note to Self: Time and Tide Wait for No One

If the Crescent City can do anything to slow its sinking it might want to do it soon if a paper published in the [Proceedings of the National Academies of Science](#) is right about the prospects for sea level rise in a warming world. The problem for New Orleans and coastal Louisiana (as it is for the Hampton Roads/Norfolk VA region as well as Jakarta, Bangladesh, Manila, and Guangzhou) is that not only is the sea rising but the land is sinking. A double whammy that can greatly accelerate the arc of risk. The trouble is, urban development patterns often take shape with no heed to the stability of the lands and water beneath them resulting induced subsidence that can overwhelm a city's natural and engineered defenses. As noted above (and as undertaken by [Texas in 1975](#)) subsidence can sometimes be reduced, but it takes management. No amount of subsidence management will negate the need to deal with rising seas and their causes, but without it New Orleans, and a lot of other places, will be in a world of hurt before sea level rise itself gets them.

In not at all related news, the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board are hoping voters will [turn out](#) this Saturday to support a drainage tax renewal.

## Quiet, Lesson Learning in Progress

It has been awhile since Michigan and good water stewardship have been mentioned in the same breath. It seems like it's about to happen (no offense to those Michigan

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The Institute is dedicated to fostering a greater appreciation and understanding of the vital role that water plays in our society and of the importance of the legal and policy framework that shapes the uses and stewardship of water.

Coming up:

[Urban Water Series: Technical Master Class](#)  
New Orleans, LA  
December 8-9, 2016

[RAE/The Coastal Society Summit on Coastal and Estuarine Restoration](#)  
New Orleans, LA  
December 10-15, 2016

Water jobs:

[Emmett/Frankel Fellowship in Environmental Law and Policy](#)  
UCLA  
Los Angeles, CA

[Attorney, Water Enforcement Division](#)  
US EPA  
Washington, D.C.

[Anthony A. Lapham River Conservation Fellow](#)  
American Rivers  
Washington, D.C.

[Climate Change Post-Doc Research Fellow](#)  
Columbia University  
New York, NY

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water managers who, by doing their jobs well, have avoided being mentioned at all in the news). The (relatively) new head of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality is getting attention for revisiting the way her agency handled [Nestlé's proposal](#) to let it to pump 167% percent more groundwater for use in its bottled water business, up to 400 gallons per minute. Public opposition to the Nestle proposal came as a public comment period was about to close following media reports about it. The fact that DEQ staffers previously approved a smaller increase with no public notice is also a factor. According to [media reports](#), MDEQ Secretary Heidi Grether is surprised that her staff was surprised that the proposal was in fact a big deal. Per those reports, she is trying to figure out how that happened. It is highly likely that she will learn, at the least, that the public does not see or hear about public notices unless someone draws them to their attention. [Quelle shock](#).

Ms. Grether took the MDEQ post last August following the departure of the previous Secretary on the heels of his mishandling of the Flint, Michigan public water supply crisis. Irony alert: A federal judge [ruled](#) last week that residents of Flint must continue to be supplied with bottled water, and not just by [Rasheed Wallace](#).

### **Love the Water, Win Big Prizes**

One of the problems with water has been that, despite its importance, it has not readily rewarded people who come up with great ideas for taking care of it. That is changing thanks to prize competitions like the \$1 million [Tulane Nitrogen Reduction Grand Challenge](#) and the about-to-be-launched \$10 million [George Barley Water Prize](#) from the Everglades Foundation. Both prizes aim to inspire new and more effective ways of reducing nutrient pollution that can spawn oxygen depleted hypoxia zones (like the infamous Dead Zone in the Gulf of Mexico) and fuel red tides. The Tulane Prize, which targets nitrogen, is driving to its exciting climax with the [recent announcement of its five finalists](#). The Everglades Foundation competition on the other hand is just kicking off. So put on your thinking caps, cheer on your favorites, and hope that we learn good things—and then actually do something with them.