

UC ANR Water Webinar



“Water Equity and Safe Drinking Water Act Compliance: Evidence from California”

By: Professor Maura Allaire, UC Irvine

Friday October 15, 2021, 3 - 4 PM

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://ucmerced.zoom.us/j/93722796133?pwd=a2FsKzBTUGVtOEovSTNVanRSNjZMdz09>

Meeting ID: 937 2279 6133; Passcode: 92837

Speaker Bio: Maura Allaire is an assistant professor at the University of California, Irvine. With expertise in water economics and spatial statistics, her research focuses on assessing equity in drinking water quality and decision support for water resource management. Her professional experience spans the public and private sectors, including international organizations (World Bank, Fulbright Scholar Program), think tanks (Resources for the Future, International Water Management Institute), and environmental consulting (AMEC). She holds a Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina and was a postdoctoral fellow at Columbia University’s Earth Institute. She currently runs the Water Equity Lab at UC-Irvine.

Abstract: Disparities in drinking water quality present a public health concern. Yet, few studies have systematically analyzed disproportionate exposure to water contaminants and the limitations of environmental rulemaking in incorporating equity considerations. This study sheds light on disparities in drinking water quality and the shortcomings of focusing on system size in regulatory assessment. We examine the relationship between water violations, scale, and socioeconomic status, using logistic regression and a balanced panel dataset of 1,710 community water systems in California from 2000-2018.

We find evidence of water equity concerns. Violation rates are several times higher at systems serving low-income areas and communities of color. These disparities are present even in models stratified by water system size; among small systems, we find significant compliance gaps across socioeconomic groups. Our findings highlight the need for environmental regulation to consider factors beyond system scale to inform new standards and targeted assistance.

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