Supporters of AL/MS Water Joint Annual Conference:

In early March, the decision was made to postpone the 2020 AL/MS Water Joint Annual Conference from April to August of 2020. This was done in response to state and federal health official guidelines and restrictions. The decision to postpone the conference proved to be the correct decision as all states instituted shelter-in-place orders and limits on crowd sizes. At the time the decision was made, much remained unknown about the emerging global crisis and our collective response.

Recently the conference planning staff and volunteers restarted the conference planning process for the August 2020 dates. These activities included reaching out to presenters and exhibitors to confirm attendance, working with event venues to finalize conference activities, and contemplating details of how to provide attendee value while also ensuring everyone’s safety. During this planning phase, the difficulties encountered with maintaining the August conference has proven insurmountable. How can we ensure the best technical program and exhibit hall when presenters and exhibitors remain unsure that they’ll be able to attend? How can we plan conference events and sessions when we remain unsure how long the state will maintain limits on group sizes? Most importantly, how do we ensure that assembling so many water professionals would not jeopardize our key mission of providing clean and safe water to citizens of our states?

We have, therefore, decided to postpone the 2020 AL/MS Water Joint Annual Conference to May 2-5, 2021. We will carry forward much of the time and energy to the new date, including the revised exhibit hall layout, conference schedule, and conference events.

To maintain our continued commitment to our organizations’ membership and conference partners, AL/MS AWWA, AWEA, and MWEA are taking the following steps in lieu of the 2020 conference:

- We are continuing planning for fall technical workshops in both Alabama and Mississippi. It is our hope that these events, with smaller crowds and less travel, will allow opportunities to obtain CEUs and PDHs. Sponsors for the 2020 AL/MS Water Joint Annual Conference will be highlighted at these events.
- All three organizations are working to host web-based educational sessions throughout the remainder of 2020. Organizational volunteers will be reaching out to AL/MS Water sponsors and exhibitors to participate in the web-based technical events.
- All three organizations and AL/MS Water webpages and social media will continue to highlight these web events, sponsors, and exhibitors as we move towards the May 2021 conference.

As we plan for the new conference dates, we welcome input and feedback on how to ensure the best experience for all involved. Additional information related to the conference postponement is included in the attached FAQ. Thank you all for your continued support of our organizations, the joint conference, and most importantly, your commitment to ensuring clean and safe water during this time when “clean” and “safe” are ever so important.