This presentation describes the nexus between debt, declining population in “shrinking” cities and towns, antiquated water infrastructure and public health, which is producing water crises in Flint, MI; Denmark, SC and Newark, NJ and around the U.S.. America’s current paradigm does not provide State or Federal funding to assist those who have been left behind in rural areas or post-industrial cities, that would allow them to maintain basic levels of civilization and water safety—short of a declared Federal emergency such as that occurring in Flint, MI. To avoid the unacceptable situation in which Americans are told their water is meeting Federal safety standards when that not true, bankrupt cities must either be exempted from Federal clean water act laws (i.e., residents told “they are on their own” in terms of water safety), or else State and Federal infrastructure assistance should be provided.

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