**Question:** In the primary drinking water standards for radioisotopes, the MCL for gross alpha activity was 15 pCi/L, **But Rn & U were excluded. Why?**

Alpha emitters with half lives less than 1 hour were excluded with the idea that little activity would remain by the time water reached users. Many (but not all) U isotopes have short half lives.

It turns out the exclusion of Rn is moot because it volatilizes before the analysis can be performed.

The standard was set in 1976, and as of 2003, **as you can see from the list, there is now a standard of 30 ug/L for U.**

Interestingly, the SDWA as amended in 1996 gives EPA the flexibility to set an MCL at a level **less stringent** than the feasible level, if the Administrator determines that the benefits do not justify the costs at the feasible level. **The EPA administrator used this flexibility for the first time** in setting the level for U = 30 ug/L (vs 20 ug/L).