
From: Wurfel, Brad (DEQ)
Sent: Friday, January 30, 2015 3:09 PM
To: cpratt@bridgemi.com
Subject: FW: Flint water piece.
Attachments: Independent Water Analysis.PDF

Hi, Chastity. Apologies we did not get to connect as you were preparing your story on Flint water. I understand DEQ staff were able to provide some data.

Overall, well done from a factual perspective. In case you have occasion to revisit the issue, keep me in mind. I'd much like to offer some DEQ perspective on our drinking water program and this situation in particular. Some key pieces that folks should know could include these:

1. The decision to leave Detroit as a water supplier and use the Flint River was developed and pushed by Flint's elected officials – over the concerns of state officials. Ultimately, the state signed off on the project (as required because of the EFM) – but consider that Genesee County still gets water from Detroit today, without a contract since last May. This switch wasn't mandated by Detroit, or the state, or anyone but the leadership in Flint, and was proposed as a money saver until the KWA system comes online.
2. The idea that the state owns Flint's water woes outright because of the presence of an EFM ignores that much of this problem is the result of decades of the city failing to perform upkeep on its system. It's worth noting that the city was approved for a DEQ revolving fund loan in 2009, and DEQ sent a letter congratulating them, only to have the city decline the loan. Seen in that light, the city's proposed solution of state forgiveness on the \$20.7 million it presently owes to the State Revolving Fund and an infusion of new, no-strings money for maintenance and line repairs looks, arguably, different. That's not to say the state won't help. But the narrative that the state owns this problem because of the EM ignores some important contributing history.
3. The heart of the problem isn't just because Flint's leaders decided to use the Flint River as a drinking water source. It's true that the river water varies in quality, and requires a flexible treatment strategy to address seasonal fluctuations, but the water aesthetics concerning residents in Flint are compounded by the fact that the system is old and has not been kept up. Flint's water system consists of more than 500 miles of pipes, and more than half of those pipe miles are more than 75 years old. Among other problems, much of the old system is cast iron (hence the color issues). The hardness of the water from the river certainly appears to be exacerbating the (rusting) discoloration. It's why GM pulled off Flint's water. Many residents also have old homes, with the same iron

pipes connecting to the mains, so two neighboring homes might have different experiences. Regardless, TTHM is odorless and colorless.

4. The Safe Drinking Water Act, and Michigan's drinking water program, regularly and rigorously reviews municipal water supplies for more than 90 different toxins, including microbial ones. The objective is comprehensive screening that keeps water quality up and mandatory reporting to help customers make informed health decisions when there's an issue, whether that's an immediate health threat (like e. coli or total coliform) or a long-term potential threat like TTHM. The program does not regulate water for aesthetics like color or smell.

One of the local television stations did independent sampling of water in Flint (and the surrounding area) for an investigative report. Their findings were consistent with what state regulators have been seeing. See enclosed.

Again, thanks for overall solid work in your Bridge piece. Let me know if you come back to this one.

Thanks,
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