
From: Crooks, Jennifer <crooks.jennifer@epa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, October 23, 2014 4:04 PM
To: janburgess52@comcast.net
Cc: Poy, Thomas; Howard, Donna; Prysby, Mike (DEQ); Busch, Stephen (DEQ); Porter, Andrea
Subject: Flint, Michigan Citizen complaint - Drinking water quality and Chloride levels

Dear Ms. Burgess: You stated below that GM is not using the treated Flint water anymore because of higher chloride levels, which is correct. If you read thru the article link that you sent me or the links below, the Michigan Dept of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) clarified that the higher chloride levels are most likely coming from the City's treatment of the Flint River water with Ferric Chloride, which acts as a coagulant to help remove suspended and dissolved solids and contaminants. A chloride is a salt compound resulting from the combination of the gas chlorine and a metal. As EPA explains (see: <http://water.epa.gov/drink/contaminants/secondarystandards.cfm>), chlorides cause corrosion.

The Secondary Maximum Contaminant Levels (SMCL) listed in the Federal regulations at 40 CFR 143.3, are levels of contaminants that represent reasonable goals for drinking water quality, and are not enforceable by the State or the Federal governments. The SMCL for chloride is 250 milligrams per liter (mg/L). The MDEQ reports that the chloride levels in the Flint drinking water are approx. 50-60 mg/L which are acceptable levels, based on the SMCL of 250 mg/L. However, it appears General Motors requires a source of water with chloride levels below 20 mg/L.

Chlorine reacts with water to create different species of compounds that serve as disinfectants and acts to oxidize viruses/bacteria, so chlorine is not the same as chloride.

http://www.mlive.com/news/flint/index.ssf/2014/10/gms_decision_to_stop_using_fli.html

http://www.mlive.com/news/flint/index.ssf/2014/10/general_motors_wont_use_flint.html

Secondly, your email refers to the poor quality of the Flint drinking water. The source of drinking water for the City of Flint was changed from Detroit (which comes from Lake Huron) to the Flint River at the end of April this year. The Flint River raw water is a different quality than the Lake Huron raw water; and requires additional treatment to ensure an acceptable quality drinking water. The MDEQ has been working closely with the Operator-in-Charge at the Flint Water Treatment plant to ensure a palatable drinking water is provided to the citizens of Flint. Please note that the use of Flint River water as a source for your drinking water is an interim source; the City of Flint plans to connect to the Karegnondi Water Authority pipeline which will draw water from Lake Huron, in 2016.

The MDEQ is aware of the multiple complaints from citizens and is working closely with the Flint Water Department to ensure the distribution system and the water treatment processes work more efficiently and more effectively. For further information, you can contact Mike Prysby at:

Mike Prysby, District Engineer
Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Office of Drinking Water and Municipal Assistance, Lansing District Office
P.O. Box 30242
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7742
(517) 290-8817

prysbryn@michigan.gov

The most likely cause of the brown water (iron deposits and sediments from the very old cast iron pipes that make up the distribution system in Flint), is incorrect use of fire hydrants by demolition contractors in the area during this time. The fire hydrants are turned on for the contractors to use, and since the water is under pressure, the fast flow of the water scours the insides of the pipes, causing sediment and rust to become free floating. The City conducts this type of cleaning of the pipes in a regulated/controlled process, and requires at least ten minutes for all the sediment to be flushed out of the water main. However, the contractors do not always let the water flush for ten minutes, thus sediment remains in the water main. The City's flushing of the water mains should alleviate the sediment and brown water issues. You can contact the Flint Water Service Center to request that your lines be fully flushed.

Telephone numbers for you to call if you have further concerns:

Flint Water Service Center deals with problems in the distribution system: 810-766-7202

Water Treatment Plant deals with the actual treatment of the water prior to its pumping into the distribution system: 810-787-6537

If you have additional questions, please contact me at (312) 886-0244 or crooks.jennifer@epa.gov.

Jennifer Kurtz Crooks
Michigan Program Manager
Ground Water and Drinking Water Branch
United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
77 West Jackson Blvd, WG-15J
Chicago, Illinois 60604
312.886.0244
crooks.jennifer@epa.gov

From: howard.donna@epa.gov [mailto:howard.donna@epa.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, October 15, 2014 11:46 AM
To: Poy, Thomas
Subject: FWD: (SDWA - FY15-122649-3715-CV) Referred to Region - Michigan

10/15/2014

SUBJECT: FWD: (SDWA - FY15-122649-3715-CV) Referred to Region - Michigan
FROM: howard.donna@epa.gov
TO: poy.thomas@epa.gov
CC:

-----Original Message-----

10/14/2014 9:07 AM

HQ LEAD NUMBER: FY15-122649-3715-CV

SUBJECT: Referred to Region - Michigan

FROM: janburgess52@comcast.net

TO:

Name: Jan Burgess

Address: 720 Commonwealth Ave

City: Flint

State: Michigan

Zip: 48503

Phone: PPI

Alleged Violator's Name: City of Flint

Alleged Violator's Address: 1101 S. Saginaw St.

Alleged Violator's City: Flint

Alleged Violator's State: Michigan

Alleged Violator's Zip: 48502

Tip or Complaint: Earlier this year, the City of Flint, MI changed its water supply from the City of Detroit [Lake Huron] to the Flint River. This river has a very long history of pollution. Since this change, our drinking water has tripled in cost and the quality varies daily. Some days it smells like an over-chlorinated swimming pool; other days, like pond scum. It often is brown in color and frequently has visible particles floating in it. We've been under several boil water advisories due to e-coli contamination. Just this morning our local paper reports that General Motors Engine plant has shut off Flint River water to the plant due to the over-chlorination and the fears that the water will cause corrosion.

http://www.mlive.com/news/flint/index.ssf/2014/10/general_motors_wont_use_flint.html#cid=nsltr_storyheadline.

People in Flint have had to resort to buying bottled water or having purification systems installed in their homes. Some residents have even had private wells dug. The water is not safe to drink, cook or wash dishes with, or even give to pets. We worry every time we shower. The City of Flint is still very economically depressed and most citizens cannot afford to do anything other than use the river water. Many of them have NO water at all due to the extremely high water bills. There is reasonable suspicion that reports have been falsified. Some residents have had water tested privately and the results are not even close to those reported by the City. Calls to the City and State have resulted in no action whatsoever.

Violation Still Occurring? Yes

State DEP/DEQ/DEM Notified? No