
From: Wurfel, Brad (DEQ)
Sent: Friday, November 13, 2015 1:17 PM
To: joosting@mlive.com
Cc: Murray, David (GOV)
Subject: Reporting on Flint.
Attachments: image2015-11-03-155158.pdf; Flint lead serv. ltr.pdf; Transmittal of Final redacted Report to MDEQ.PDF

Hey, Jonathan.

Just a reminder that you can contact the DEQ as you develop these pieces, if you wanted to inform them or balance them out.

Also wanted to make sure you've got the latest information on this issue.

Enclosed is the EPA's final guidance on Lead and Copper rule, released nationally on Election Day, which notes the corrosion control provision in the federal law is written ambiguously and we actually didn't violate the protocol. It's not to say we'd do it that way again, given all we've learned about corrosion control in the past few months, but worth noting.

Also, EPA's final version of the Del Toral memo, which was leaked as a draft in June and finalized / issued just after Election Day, which notes we're now implementing everything that was in the original draft memo from June.

Your piece below implies DEQ is not currently using an EPA-approved water testing method. Not so. But we're taking a look at other protocol options as part of an internal department review. A bigger priority is making sure the city is actually sending its sample bottles to homes that actually have lead service lines or some plumbing componentry that qualifies those residences as usable sites under the federal Lead and Copper rule. Enclosed our letter to Flint this week for your information.

If you want updates on what's happening in the city, Check out the web page.

http://michigan.gov/deq/0,4561,7-135-3313_3675_73946---,00.html

And do feel free to call anytime. My numbers are below.

Thanks.

b

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FLINT WATER

- County Health Department, state partner to educate Flint area on lead
- Four ways Flint failed in its testing for lead in water
- 'Water is a human right,' Democrats say with new bills addressing Flint crisis, Detroit shutoffs
- Documents show Flint filed false reports about testing for lead in water
- Flint water crisis: The key figures

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LANSING, MI — Flint mom Melissa Mays believes her three sons are starting to struggle in school because they drank contaminated city water, and she's worried the full effect of lead poisoning, which can cause irreversible brain damage, will not be known for years.

"Something that is supposed to nourish us and keep us alive was treated as a commodity — the quality was ignored, the signs were ignored," Mays said Thursday. "What we're seeing is a complete disregard for human life, human safety and the future of our children."

Mays, who has become a leading water activist in the midst of her city's public health crisis, joined lawmakers at the Michigan Capitol as they announced a new package of bills to address water quality and affordability issues in Flint and other parts of the state.

"There's a moral goal here," said Rep. Sheldon Neeley, D-Flint, urging the Snyder administration to consider the package.

Neeley plans to introduce legislation that would require the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to collect water samples using federally-approved procedures. His bill would prohibit a sampling procedure known as "pre-flushing," which can lower lead level readings.

MDEQ has acknowledged it enforced the wrong federal standards for treating Flint water, and records recently obtained by The Flint Journal show the city also disregarded federal rules for seeking out homes with lead plumbing to test.

"Water is a human right" according to Rep. Julie Plawecki, D-Dearborn Heights, who is preparing to introduce legislation that would define it as such.

"It's hard to believe that in Michigan, the Great Lakes State, that water is not clean, affordable and accessible to everyone," she said, going on to acknowledge that her proposal is more conceptual than enforceable.

"Are there teeth behind this bill? Possibly not, but at least we're making a statement that everybody in Michigan has a right."

Flint Mom Melissa Mays Talks Drinking Water At the Michigan Capitol on November 12, 2015.

Other bills in the pending package, spearheaded by Democratic Reps. Stephanie Chang and LaTanya Garrett of Detroit, seek to limit the kind of large-scale water shutoffs that have effected thousands of residents in Detroit and Highland Park.

Detroit, which has moved forward with water shutoffs despite protests, has tens of thousands of residents who are behind on their bills. Highland Park is facing its own shutoff crisis caused, in part, by the city's own inconsistent water billing.

"What happened in our cities could happen in others," said Chang.

The legislation would require water utilities to disclose shut-off statistics online, require clearer notices about shutoffs, prohibit shutoffs for some vulnerable residents, provide more payment options for residents who fall behind and make illegal water reconnections a misdemeanor instead of felony.

"We are not saying that it is right to reconnect, but we need to go back and revisit why people are reconnecting water and reduce the sentence," said Garrett.

Lawmakers at Thursday's press conference hailed exclusively from the Democratic side of the aisle, but Rep. Ned Canfield, R-Sebewaing, is also expected to introduce a bill related to water bill frequency. Companion legislation is expected in the Senate as well.

Jonathan Oosting is a Capitol reporter for MLive Media Group. Email him, find him on Facebook or follow him on Twitter.