
From: Chris DeWitt <chris@dewitt-communications.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2015 4:36 PM
To: Murray, David (GOV); hollandm2@michigan.org; Hollins, Harvey (GOV)
Subject: Fw: FWATF letter to Governor Snyder
Attachments: FWATF-Snyder Letter 12-29-15.pdf

FYI

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From: Chris DeWitt
Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2015 4:13 PM
Subject: FWATF letter to Governor Snyder

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Contact: Chris De Witt

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FWATF Finds MDEQ Primarily Responsible For Flint Water Crisis

Lansing, MI—The Flint Water Advisory Task Force today released a letter sent to Governor Rick Snyder advising him of the Task Force's finding that the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality is primarily responsible for failing to ensure safe drinking water in Flint and must be held accountable. A copy of the letter is attached.

The FWATF letter stated in part:

“We believe the primary responsibility for what happened in Flint rests with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). Although many individuals and entities at state and local levels contributed to creating and prolonging the problem, MDEQ is the government agency that has responsibility to ensure safe drinking water in Michigan. It failed in that responsibility and must be held accountable for that failure.”

“...we believe that establishing responsibility is a critical and urgent need, and one that should not wait for our final report in 2016. Individuals and agencies responsible must be held accountable in a timely fashion.”

“The City of Flint’s water customers—fellow Michigan citizens—were needlessly and tragically exposed to toxic levels of lead through their drinking water supply. They deserve a commitment to properly assess responsibility and ensure accountability. They also deserve a commitment to needed mitigation in both the short and long term. The Flint water crisis never should have happened. Having failed to prevent it, state government should coordinate a sustained, public-health-focused response to remedy, to the fullest extent possible, the impacts on the Flint community.”

The letter outlined three areas where MDEQ failed:

- Regulatory Failure
- Failure in Substance and Tone of MDEQ Response to the Public
- Failure in MDEQ Interpretation of the Lead and Copper Rule

“Flint residents were exposed to toxic levels of lead in their water primarily due to a regulatory culture of passive technical compliance that is simply insufficient to the task of public protection,” FWATF Co-Chair Ken Sikkema said. “We also believe that the dismissive and disrespectful tone of much of the MDEQ’s response to public concerns is unacceptable.”

“The failure to protect the public will have lifelong consequences.” FWATF Co-Chair Chris Kolb said. “It will be important going forward for long term support to be provided to Flint residents unnecessarily hurt by using City water.”

“We believe that as the Great Lakes State, Michigan should aspire to have the safest drinking water in the nation, rather than merely aiming for technical compliance with regulatory requirements,” Kolb and Sikkema added. “Our final report will make recommendations that will help make this aspiration a reality.”

This is the second letter sent by the Task Force. The first, sent earlier this month, made several recommendations concerning coordination of state efforts that were supported and implemented by Governor Snyder.

The full FWATF report is expected to be completed in early 2016.

Members of the Task Force include:

Matthew Davis, M.D., M.A.P.P., is professor of pediatrics and internal medicine at the University of Michigan Health System and professor of public policy at the Gerald R. Ford School at the University of Michigan, having joined the faculty in 2000. Davis also is a professor of health management and policy at the School of Public Health. He previously served as the chief medical executive of the Michigan Department of Community Health/Department of Health and Human Services.

Chris Kolb is president of the Michigan Environmental Council, a statewide coalition of 70 environmental, public health and faith-based nonprofit groups. Before joining the MEC, Kolb represented Ann Arbor in the state House for six years and served six years on the Ann Arbor City Council. He has been president of the MEC for six years.

Lawrence Reynolds, M.D., is a pediatrician in Flint who serves as president of the Mott Children's Health Center. He received his medical degree from Howard University College of Medicine and has been in practice for 36 years. He has served as president of the Genesee County Medical Society and the Michigan Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. He has been honored for his humanitarian and advocacy efforts on behalf of children from the Community Foundation of Greater Flint.

Eric Rothstein is a national water issues consultant and principal at the Galardi Rothstein Group. He served as an independent advisor on the creation of the Great Lakes Water Authority. Rothstein also has served as Jefferson County, Alabama's rate consultant and municipal adviser for litigation related to the county's bankruptcy and issuance of \$1.7 billion in sewer warrants and led strategic financial planning for the City of Atlanta's Department of Watershed Management. He has more than 30 years of experience in water, wastewater and stormwater utility finance and rate-making assessments.

Ken Sikkema is a senior policy fellow at Public Sector Consultants, where he specializes in public finance, environment, and energy policy. Prior to joining the firm, Sikkema served in both the Michigan House and Senate, culminating with four years as Senate majority leader. He has also served as both an adjunct and visiting professor at Grand Valley State University.

The FWATF was formed by Governor Snyder to review actions regarding the Flint water system and offer recommendations both for Flint and Michigan to protect the health and safety of state residents.

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