

Rennaker, Joanne (DEQ)

From: Crooks, Jennifer <crooks.jennifer@epa.gov>
Sent: Monday, February 09, 2015 9:22 AM
To: Benzie, Richard (DEQ); Prysby, Mike (DEQ); Busch, Stephen (DEQ)
Subject: FYI: (CWA - FY15-124819-3709-CV) Referred to Region - Michigan

Forgot to cc you all. Jen

From: Crooks, Jennifer
Sent: Monday, February 09, 2015 8:09 AM
To: Dee, Rhiannon
Cc: Poy, Thomas
Subject: RE: (CWA - FY15-124819-3709-CV) Referred to Region - Michigan

Rhiannon—Let me tell you, this Flint situation is a nasty issue—I've had people call me 4 letter words over the phone, yell at me, and call me a crook—yes, the last one was a play on my last name—I didn't think it was funny, though I'm developing a thick skin ☺.

I can respond to the Flint drinking water issue, and the water rate issue, and refer them back to the State if they have further questions. But I cannot respond to the sewerage dump (who receives the report when there is a sewer overflow?) or the chemical—though Richard is probably right—the 'toxic chemical' is probably chlorine—and that's what I'll say in my response. One citizen was confused about 'chlorides' being 'chlorine'....

Let me know if you would like me to respond to this citizen complaint as I explained above.

Jennifer

From: Dee, Rhiannon
Sent: Friday, February 06, 2015 10:50 AM
To: Benzie, Richard (DEQ)
Cc: ostlundp@michigan.gov; Busch, Stephen (DEQ); Prysby, Mike (DEQ); Crooks, Jennifer; Poy, Thomas; Vantil, Barbara
Subject: RE: (CWA - FY15-124819-3709-CV) Referred to Region - Michigan

Richard,

While I understand this complaint conflates various issues, my intention of forwarding it on to Pete and Barry was to relay the potential NPDES impacts of the complainants allegations.

Best,

Rhiannon Dee
 Program Analyst
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
 Water Division, WC-15J
 (312) 886-4882
dee.rhiannon@epa.gov

From: Benzie, Richard (DEQ) [<mailto:BENZIER@michigan.gov>]
Sent: Friday, February 06, 2015 9:38 AM

To: Dee, Rhiannon

Cc: ostlundp@michigan.gov; Busch, Stephen (DEQ); Prysby, Mike (DEQ); Crooks, Jennifer; Poy, Thomas

Subject: RE: (CWA - FY15-124819-3709-CV) Referred to Region - Michigan

I'm not sure what this complainant is alleging. Do you want Michigan to respond to the allegation that a "company or individual dumped millions of gallons of raw sewage into the city of Flint drinking water" or the allegation that "they(?) have dumped a potential cancer causing chemical into the city's drinking water" or the allegation that the city of Flint is flushing hydrants and charging customers double? The Office of Drinking Water and Municipal Assistance cannot address the issue surrounding the dumping of raw sewage and we don't interfere with water rates, but maybe an explanation of the issues that have confronted the city of Flint and their public water supply will help you understand the overall problem.

Last spring, the city of Flint decided to begin relying upon the Flint River as their source of drinking water using a treatment plant that was designed to do so. Last summer, they experienced difficulties with stagnation in some areas of the distribution system due to significantly reduced demands as a result of the loss of a significant percentage of their residential and industrial demands that accelerated over the last decade. During the summer of 2014, they also had a couple of monitoring periods where they detected total coliform at monitoring sites in these stagnant areas, and one time they detected E.coli present. The ensuing boil water advisories and public notification heightened customer concern about the quality of drinking water as a result of the switch from Detroit to the Flint River. Detroit supplied Flint with drinking water from Lake Huron, a much higher quality source than the Flint River. However, monitoring of the Flint water treatment plant tap has never indicated unacceptable water entering the distribution system. In response to these coliform detections and in an effort to prevent a recurrence, the city also increased flushing water mains in low flow areas and they have attempted to ensure the presence of a chlorine residual throughout the distribution system (is this the "potential cancer causing chemical" the complainant mentions?).

Compounding the problem of customer confidence was the initial monitoring for disinfection byproducts conducted by Flint under the Stage 2 DBR after their switch to the Flint River. The initial monitoring reported significantly elevated levels of total trihalomethane (TTHM) compounds throughout the city's distribution system. Our district office advised the city that they needed to immediately implement operational techniques at the treatment plant and in the distribution system to reduce the formation of these compounds. The steps the city of Flint has taken have been successful and have reduced TTHM concentrations to the point where the latest results are below the drinking water standard. However, the standard is calculated on a running annual average and it is likely to be another 3 to 6 months before the annual average at each monitoring station will (hopefully) meet the standard. Until then, the city has to continue to provide quarterly public notification, which will continue to concern residents despite the latest TTHM results.

The switch to the Flint River, the microbiological problems and the elevated TTHM concentrations experienced last year in Flint have caused a high level of customer dissatisfaction and distrust. The city is working diligently to restore that confidence, but it will not be accomplished easily or overnight. You should also know that the switch to the Flint River is an interim measure intended to last only until a 72-inch pipeline from Lake Huron to the Flint water treatment plant is completed. It is currently under construction and expected to be in operation in mid-2016. At that point, the city's drinking water should again be very similar in quality to what they were receiving from Detroit.

Although the subject(s) of this complaint are not clear to me, I suspect it is a result of the media coverage of the recent problems with the city's water supply. However, the information from your initial contact indicates a Grand Blanc, Michigan address, which is not in the city of Flint service area. As I mentioned, our Lansing district office has been dealing with city representatives on this issue. If you have further questions, feel free to contact either Michael Prysby or Steve Busch. They are receiving this message so you have their contact information. You may also wish to communicate with your Region 5 counterparts in the Office of Drinking Water & Ground Water, Jennifer Crooks or Tom Poy, who have received similar complaints and with whom we have communicated regularly on these issues.