

Cc: Carpenter, Joe (CDC/OID/NCEZID); Yoder, Jonathan S. (CDC/OID/NCEZID); Robinson, Felecia (CDC/OID/NCEZID) (CTR); Beach, Michael J. (CDC/OID/NCEZID); Gargano, Julia Marie W. (CDC/OID/NCEZID); Sarisky, John (CDC/ONDIEH/NCEH); Blake, Robert G. (CDC/ONDIEH/NCEH)
Subject: FW: Briefing -- Flint River for drinking water, Michigan

Mark,

Am cc'ing our water engineer, Joe Carpenter, for his take on this. We have heard of the rashes related to switch to chloramine (not happening here) w, which has become very activist oriented but not sure from the data here what this might be. Also including the EH services Branch for input

Michael

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From: Johnson, Mark (EPA) (CDC epa.gov)
Sent: Friday, June 20, 2014 5:57 PM
To: Beach, Michael J. (CDC/OID/NCEZID); Roberts, Virginia (CDC/OID/NCEZID)
Subject: FW: Briefing -- Flint River for drinking water, Michigan

Michael and Virginia

We were contacted by USEPA this week regarding complaints from residents of Flint, Michigan associated with the quality of their drinking water. There have been recent taste and odor complaints, but also claims of people developing rashes. The complaints seem to correspond to the timeframe the City of Flint switching from purchasing water from the City of Detroit to utilizing their own treatment system that takes water from the Flint River, which began in late April, 2014.

Although this is a regulatory compliance issue, ATSDR was contacted to assist in addressing health concerns in the community. Although the analytical testing does not indicate the presence of chemicals that appear to be a health concern, the fact that their raw water is coming from a new source raises questions about other constituents that have not been evaluated. We will be contacting the Michigan Dept. of Community Health, but we also wanted to contact your program to see if you get involved with these situations and can offer some advice.

Let me know what you think.

Mark

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From: Crooks, Jennifer
Sent: Friday, June 20, 2014 3:07 PM
To: Johnson, Mark
Cc: Poy, Thomas; Prysby, Mike (DEQ); Busch, Stephen (DEQ); Shoven, Heather; Murphy, Thomas
Subject: Briefing – Flint River for drinking water, Michigan

Mark—as we discussed earlier this week, below is a briefing containing the information we discussed regarding the Flint, Michigan water supply. I am out of the office this coming week; if you have questions, please contact Tom Poy, Ground Water and Drinking Water Branch Chief.

Thank you for your time!

Jennifer

Drinking Water in Flint, Michigan

ISSUE: Flint began pumping/treating/distributing Flint River water as their drinking water source on April 25, 2014, and beginning in mid-May, there have been numerous complaints to the Region 5 Ground Water and Drinking Water Branch regarding the drinking water, including rotten egg smell, swamp water smell, people developing rashes. The Region immediately contacted and involved the Drinking Water program at the Michigan Dept of Environmental Quality (MDEQ).

BACKGROUND: Flint has been purchasing finished drinking water from Detroit for decades (source water is Lake Huron). It has been delivered by a large single pipeline from Detroit. In the late 1980's, the State drinking water staff requested that Flint renovate their old surface water treatment plant to meet the State's redundancy requirements, in case the single pipeline from Detroit was unable to transmit finished drinking water. Flint would treat Flint River water periodically throughout the year, to verify that the water treatment plant (WTP) was able to treat Flint River water that met Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) standards.

Over the past 15 years or so, Detroit has seen a decrease in its City population, and an increase in poverty/low income residents. Detroit currently has an Emergency Manager due to poor financial situation. (As an aside, last year the City of Highland Park told Detroit it was unable to pay its water/sewer bills, and currently has an Emergency Manager. Highland Park was unable to obtain funding to retrofit its surface water treatment plant, so Detroit is providing water/sewer currently to Highland Park for free.) In order to continue to provide adequately treated water that meets SDWA Health standards, the suburbs have been subsidizing the lower income residents for years. Consequently, communities like Flint have decided to find an alternate source of drinking water.

A regional water authority was formed in 2010, the Karegnondi Water Authority (KWA), which will serve water in mid-Michigan and the Thumb areas. Members of the KWA include Flint, Lapeer; and Genesee, Lapeer and Sanilac Counties. The KWA is currently constructing the Karegnondi pipeline to bring raw water from Lake Huron. It will be completed in about 2 years. Flint has an Emergency Manager now, and I think on paper, it looked like a savings to pump and treat Flint River water for the 2-year interim period prior to connecting to the Karegnondi pipeline, than to continue to pay Detroit prices for finished drinking water. MDEQ has worked long and hard with the City of Flint and water operators to get the WTP ready to treat Flint River water for the next few years. Complete operation/treatment began April 25, 2014.