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Flint To Return To Detroit Water, Gov Asks Lawmakers To Help Cover Cost

(FLINT) -- The city of Flint will transition back to getting its water from Detroit within weeks, and Gov. Rick **SNYDER** said today he is in "full support."

In addition to that, Snyder said he would ask the Legislature for \$6 million to assist with the move, which will amount to half of the estimated \$12 million it will cost Flint to go back to its old water supply through next summer.

The other \$6 million will come from Flint itself -- \$2 million -- and a donation from the Mott Foundation -- \$4 million.

The costs to go back to Detroit water break down to about \$1.3 million a month for the city, according to the Governor's Office. The switch is not expected to have an impact on Flint ratepayers, said Jason **LORENZ**, spokesperson for the city of Flint.

The transition cost estimate of \$12 million is influenced by the time it will take to complete the connection to Flint's new permanent water supply, the Karegnondi Water Authority. That's expected to go live in the summer of 2016.

But for now, Flint Mayor Dayne **WALLING** said the city would be hooked up with Detroit again within two weeks.

Snyder said his support of the move back to Detroit water -- something he said Flint was ultimately in charge of deciding -- was based in part by a recommendation made by a meeting of technical experts Wednesday.

As public furor reached critical mass in recent weeks over the condition of Flint's drinking water, many people had called for the city to return to water provided by the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD), soon to be known as the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA).

The city had switched to drawing water from the Flint River back in April 2014, but residents' complaints about the quality of the water were quick to follow, according to a [timeline](#) about the saga that the city assembled on its website.

Last week, when state officials announced their action steps to deal with the Flint water crisis, it was mentioned Snyder was open to supporting the move back to Detroit water (See "State Plan For Flint Water Includes More Testing, \$1 Million For Filters." 10/2/15).

Now, the state is committed to the idea, but with the same caution it issued last week: This still won't fix the long-term problems of lead pipes running beneath people's homes.

Those pipes were blamed for leaching lead into the water, and tests showing increased lead levels in children's

blood soon followed (See “State Tries To Soothe Growing Alarm Over Flint Water,” 10/1/15).

Meanwhile, Snyder also announced the state will be reprioritizing some \$3.5 million in existing funds to go toward water filters, free lead testing and hiring additional staff, according to the Governor's press release.

But the \$6 million Snyder is requesting from the Legislature to help with Flint's transition back to DWSD would be new money.

Senate Minority Leader Jim **ANANICH** (D-Flint) -- who appeared at the press conference today alongside Snyder, various cabinet officials and Flint leaders -- said he's hopeful “it won't be that hard of a pitch” to get his legislative colleagues to go along with the ask.

“This is lead in the water, elevated lead levels in children's blood, and I think I've been a good help for my colleagues when they've had disasters in their community, and I'm hopeful” they will do the same for his community, Ananich said.

Ananich said he's been outspoken in demanding Flint be switched back to Detroit water. He held his own press conference last week, separate from the one the state hosted to announce its action plan.

The Senate Minority Leader said at the press conference today that this wasn't a victory for Flint, but rather a fix that was “unfortunately necessary.” But he acknowledged later that today's announcement was a step in the right direction.

U.S. Rep. Dan **KILDEE** (D-Flushing), in a statement today, insisted the state pick up the tab to switch Flint back to Detroit water, tying the issue back to a decision made while Flint was under a state-appointed emergency manager.

“Flint is a financially distressed city, and it should not have to empty out its bank account to pay for the state's failures,” Kildee said. “The decision to switch to the Flint River water source was made while the city was under state emergency management, and now it is incumbent on Governor Snyder and the state to fix -- and pay -- for the problem they created.”

Reporters lobbed questions at officials today about how and why Flint got to this point, more than a year after the switch was made and when residents began complaining about it shortly thereafter.

Snyder made mention of his team crafting an “after-action report” that would provide a look at the events.

“I think it's clear there will be at least several recommendations that will be out there, both at the state level and the local level and the federal level on things that we could have potentially seen opportunities,” Snyder said

One of those recommendations could involve testing for lead in schools. Snyder said the state followed federal regulations, and as part of that, “there's no inclusion of schools, which I think it probably should be something that could be corrected in the longer term.”

DEQ spokesperson Brad **WURFEL** said the state is looking at putting together an educational program for schools across the state to encourage them to consider more lead testing in their buildings.

The state today also announced results of some testing it's done in schools and homes in Flint.

It found four samples out of 37 it took that exceeded the “federal action level” of 15 parts per billion, said Dan **WYANT**, director of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).