
From: Wurfel, Brad (DEQ)
Sent: Wednesday, September 09, 2015 4:36 PM
To: Jason Lorenz
Subject: RE: Latest Statements from the City of Flint

Thread on Virginia Tech:

Ron,

As we discussed last week, the state DEQ is just as perplexed by Edwards' results as he seems to be by the city's test results, which are done according to state and federal sampling guidelines and analyzed in certified labs.

When I said we were unsure how the Virginia Tech team got its results, that's not the same as being surprised that they got them. There are a conservatively estimated 15,000 old homes with lead plumbing in Flint alone, and this group specializes in looking for high lead problems. They pull that rabbit out of that hat everywhere they go. Nobody should be surprised when the rabbit comes out of the hat, even if they can't figure out how it is done.

It's scientifically probable a research team that specializes in looking for lead in water could have found it in Flint when the city was on its old water supply. We won't know that, because they've only just arrived in town and quickly proven the theory they set out to prove, and while the state appreciates academic participation in this discussion, offering broad, dire public health advice based on some quick testing could be seen as fanning political flames irresponsibly. Residents of Flint concerned about the health of their community don't need more of that.

As I mentioned last week, the issue here isn't Flint's water source or water plants. It's the high number of older homes with lead pipes and lead service connections. Anyone with lead plumbing in their homes should recognize there's some communication of lead from that.

The state and the EPA are working together in Flint – have been from the start, and we are in regular communication with federal counterparts to discuss Flint water. The state's program has been in place, protecting community water supplies for more than 40 years around the state. The reason this conversation began is because we have lead and copper rules; the city met the state and federal standard, and has agreed to further optimize its system to even further reduce lead levels, but let's be clear: lead pipes means some lead in water, at some level. Folks who have concerns should get a water specialist to take a look at their home and see what they need to do to achieve peace of mind, because lead and copper are home plumbing problems that no water source can eliminate entirely.

b

Brad Wurfel
Communications Director
Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
517-284-6713
[PPI] cell

From: Ronald Fonger [mailto:RFONGER1@mlive.com]

Sent: Tuesday, September 08, 2015 11:39 AM

To: Wurfel, Brad (DEQ)

Subject: flint water

Brad:

This was posted by the Virginia Tech researchers this morning.

Since a part of it speaks directly to MDEQ's involvement in the Flint water situation, I wanted to see if we can get a comment from you for an initial story that I hope to post in about two hours.

Thanks,

<http://flintwaterstudy.org/2015/09/our-sampling-of-252-low-risk-homes-demonstrates-a-high-lead-in-water-risk-flint-should-be-failing-to-meet-the-epa-lead-and-copper-rule/>

Ron Fonger

MLive Media Group

Reporter

mobile

PPI

email rfonger1@mlive.com

address 540 S. Saginaw St. #101, Flint MI 48502

Response to request for comment on the mayoral candidate's remarks yesterday, that President Obama should have the EPA investigate DEQ's handling of the City's testing for lead and copper (among other things):

Ron,

I'll leave it to EPA to discuss unofficial draft reports by their folks.

We appreciate that residents of Flint have concerns about their water. The state's drinking water program, which implements federal safe drinking water laws and standards, oversees municipal supplies around the state, and has worked to ensure safe drinking water for more than four decades.

Municipal operators screen drinking water supplies for more than 90 different contaminants. Providers are required to employ certified, trained operators, because it is a complex task to maintain safe drinking water for tens of thousands of people or more.

The City of Flint has challenges, no question. Decades of forestalled maintenance of hundreds of miles of cast-iron water transmission lines around the city, much of which is beyond its service life; coupled with changes in city population size that put new demands on an old system that, in some places, impacts water quality; compounded by a rate structure which makes Flint's water very expensive, are all serious issues the city must confront. Few argue that the solution won't be cheap