From: Shekter Smith, Liane (DEQ)
Sent: Wednesday, September 02, 2015 1:38 PM
To: Busch, Stephen (DEQ);Benzie, Richard (DEQ);Prysby, Mike (DEQ)
Subject: RE: DRAFT Flint Journal response -- edit, add and subtract from this as you see fit. Need it asap. Thanks!

What neither of you have touched upon is Dr. Edwards claim that using the Flint River as a source the finished water from the treatment plant is 12 times more corrosive than water they used to receive from the city of Detroit. I'm not sure what we can say about this, but it does seem to be the elephant in the room. When we bring up 25 years of good lead sampling results, that seems to bolster the argument further. While we do mention the recent 6-month rounds of sampling, perhaps we need to emphasize this more.

From: Busch, Stephen (DEQ)
Sent: Wednesday, September 02, 2015 1:34 PM
To: Benzie, Richard (DEQ); Shekter Smith, Liane (DEQ); Prysby, Mike (DEQ)
Subject: RE: DRAFT Flint Journal response -- edit, add and subtract from this as you see fit. Need it asap. Thanks!

I had already started over lunch and am half way through.

First, we want to be very clear that the source of this lead is not from the City's source water or the treated water from the City's water treatment plant. Treated water from the plant continues to show no detectable level of lead according to state analysis. The Flint public water distribution system is not constructed of lead piping materials. However lead materials were used decades ago for service lines, and household plumbing, both of which are not part of the public water system. Property owners who have failed to replace such materials continue to expose themselves to at least some level of lead.

The DEQ regulates the impact of the City's water on leaching such metals to help limit this exposure. The City has continued to comply with the federal Action Level standard for lead since regulations became effective in 1991. The state's monitoring program, which uses certified laboratories and a standardized, federal testing protocol, looks specifically at the homes in communities most likely to experience lead problems.

While Dr. Edwards is well respected in this field, we are not aware of any certification for his university's research laboratory for metals analysis, and it does not appear he has disclosed this fact. It is also disappointing that he has not fully disclosed information regarding each of these test results. What instructions were provided to residents for collection the sample, plumbing conditions within the home, sample preservation, chain of custody documentation, etc. In many cases it appears samples were collected in a manner that is not consistent with Safe Drinking Water Act requirements. His finding of lead in and of itself is not surprising as the City has for decades documented that fact that over 15,000 customers have at least some lead materials.

Stephen Busch, P.E.
MDEQ Lansing District Coordinator
Office of Drinking Water and Municipal Assistance
Lansing and Jackson District Supervisor
517-643-2314
buschs@michigan.gov

From: Benzie, Richard (DEQ)
Sent: Wednesday, September 02, 2015 1:32 PM
To: Busch, Stephen (DEQ); Shekter Smith, Liane (DEQ); Prysby, Mike (DEQ)
Subject: RE: DRAFT Flint Journal response -- edit, add and subtract from this as you see fit. Need it asap. Thanks!

Here are my suggested edits in an attached word document. I thought we should probably just draft a single response so I am circulating it to you three before we reply to Brad.

From: Wurfel, Brad (DEQ)
Sent: Wednesday, September 02, 2015 12:12 PM
To: Busch, Stephen (DEQ); Shekter Smith, Liane (DEQ); Benzie, Richard (DEQ); Prysby, Mike (DEQ)
Subject: DRAFT Flint Journal response -- edit, add and subtract from this as you see fit. Need it asap. Thanks!

We are aware that Virginia Tech researchers are now testing water at various Flint homes for lead levels in their plumbing.

First, we want to be very clear that the lead issue in Flint, to the extent there is one, is not from the source water or the plant or even the transmission lines. The river has no detectable levels of lead in it, and treated water from the plant has not detectable levels of lead in it. The issue is how, whether, and to what extent the water is interacting with lead plumbing in people's homes.

It does not appear their research lab is certified, and we can't speak to the whatever sampling methods are being employed to achieve these results. The results reported so far fail to track with any of the lead sampling done by the DEQ for the past 25 years (since 1991), or the blood lead levels testing regularly conducted by the state department of community health. That said, we do appreciate that Virginia Tech's team is working on this issue because it brings the public spotlight on an important fact: if you have lead water pipes in your home, or a lead service connection to the city system, it is very likely you are ingesting some level of lead. That's just a fact, and in the City of Flint that fact affects 15,000 or more residences.

The state's monitoring program, which uses certified laboratories and a standardized, federal testing protocol, looks specifically at the homes in communities most likely to experience lead problems. Our results, obtained from two separate rounds of testing over the past year, concluded that the mean average of lead in Flint drinking water, meets state and federal safe drinking water standards.

That said, the state is pushing Flint to 'optimize' its water, which means addressing additives that can minimize the extent to which the water interacts with lead plumbing in homes. While statute allows several years for an operator actually undertake this process -- Detroit took five years to complete its water optimization work -- we are encouraging Flint water system operators to take these steps immediately and we are encouraged by the conversation so far.

Any resident who has concerns about lead in their drinking water should have their water tested and get professional consultation on how to address it. The leading cause of lead poisoning is known to be lead paint and, in some areas, environmental legacy hot spots where lead is present in soils.