
From: Wyant, Dan (DEQ)
Sent: Sunday, October 04, 2015 1:36 PM
To: Pallone, Maggie (DEQ)
Subject: Fwd: DRAFT Freep Editorial
Attachments: DRAFT freep editorial short 092015.docx; ATT00001.htm

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Wurfel, Brad (DEQ)" <WurfelB@michigan.gov>
Date: October 1, 2015 at 2:15:15 AM EDT
To: "Wyant, Dan (DEQ)" <WyantD@michigan.gov>, "Lyon, Nick (DHHS)" <LyonN2@michigan.gov>, "Wurfel, Sara (GOV)" <WurfelS@michigan.gov>, "Lasher, GERALYN (DHHS)" <lasherG@michigan.gov>, "Tommasulo, Karen (DEQ)" <TommasuloK@michigan.gov>
Cc: "Muchmore, Dennis (GOV)" <muchmored@michigan.gov>
Subject: DRAFT Freep Editorial

First cut at the Free Press rebuttal editorial. Please review and advise.

Phone conversations preferable.

b

Brad Wurfel
Communications Director
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PPI cell

A new way forward in Flint

State regulatory leaders were disappointed by recent Free Press editorials mischaracterizing Lansing's oversight of the City of Flint's drinking water system. The paper's portrayal of the state as uncaring about drinking water quality and the community's exposure to lead are simply off the mark.

State and federal regulators run programs to monitor lead in drinking water and in kids' blood levels specifically to track lead impacts on our communities. Lead is a real concern, particularly in children, and we take our responsibility seriously.

But it is important to remember that lead is all around us. It is in soils, deposited for decades by leaded fuel and industrial processes. It is paint, in homes built in the mid-1970s or earlier. And it is unfortunately common in the plumbing and service connections of older homes, which is why the DEQ requires community water sources around the state to track and record it and take steps when levels surpass federal action thresholds.

Let's be clear: The Flint River is not contributing lead. The water leaving the drinking water plant is clean and safe. The water traveling through the distribution system also is free of lead. The lead issues are the result of water in homes that have lead service lines or lead plumbing. And because the contamination factor is at the homeowner level, it is difficult to track or assess with the kind of specificity customers would like to think regulators have. Two homes on the same block might have very different results from lead testing, based on what kind of plumbing they have and how homeowners use their water.

Moreover, the City's efforts to test for lead involve sending water sampling kits to homeowners and relying on them to participate and follow the sampling instructions, and that has been a long-standing challenge in Flint. This year, the City sent out 200 bottles in January and got 60 samples back by June. We must operate on the best knowledge we have available, and we only know what the customers let us know by participating in the City's testing.

Emerging data from local doctors, however, added to our knowledge enough to spark some unusual precautionary actions. They reported to the media that blood lead levels in Flint kids at their offices are up this year. It's still early to know exactly what that means, but because lead is a serious threat to children's development, we have decided to take some short-term precautionary measures and do more to learn exactly what is happening in the city.

The state today joined with local and federal authorities to present an 11-step action plan designed to produce a clearer picture of lead in the community's water, offer immediate protection for its kids and families with corrosion control and free lead water