
From: Wyant, Dan (DEQ)
Sent: Sunday, October 04, 2015 1:39 PM
To: Pallone, Maggie (DEQ)
Cc: Thelen, Mary Beth (DEQ)
Subject: Fwd: Mlive guest column 092015
Attachments: Mlive guest column 092015.docx; ATT00001.htm

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Wurfel, Brad (DEQ)" <WurfelB@michigan.gov>
Date: October 1, 2015 at 3:40:28 AM EDT
To: "Wyant, Dan (DEQ)" <WyantD@michigan.gov>, "Lyon, Nick (DHHS)" <LyonN2@michigan.gov>, "Lasher, Geralyn (DHHS)" <lasherg@michigan.gov>, "Tommasulo, Karen (DEQ)" <TommasuloK@michigan.gov>, "Wurfel, Sara (GOV)" <Wurfels@michigan.gov>
Cc: "Muchmore, Dennis (GOV)" <muchmored@michigan.gov>
Subject: Mlive guest column 092015

First cut at Mlive guest column. Same drill as last email, please review and advise before we share it around to the broader group.

Thanks.

b

Leaders address 'crisis of confidence' with Flint water

Residents of Flint have been hearing concerning news about the municipal water supply for more than a year. Since the City switched water supplies and began using the Flint River as its source, some have complained that the water is different. State regulators have cited the system for various compliance issues.

More recently, voices within the community – and some from other states – have alleged state regulators failed to do their jobs. It simply is not the case. Leaders from the regulatory community today announced an 11-point plan to build our knowledge about lead in flint, better protect the community and restore public confidence in the regulatory framework.

Over the past year, the city has completed lead and copper testing required by law. Lead is a real concern, particularly in children. 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.

It is important to remember lead comes from many sources, particularly in the state's urban and industrial areas. 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 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.

Flint's drinking water passed its lead and copper test. However, testing done by non-regulatory entities produced a different picture, creating confusion and concern – for residents of Flint as well as city, state and federal regulators.

The lead in question does not come from the Flint River. 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 happen when the water reaches homes that have lead service lines or lead plumbing. This is important to know for two reasons: One, because the contamination happens at the homeowner level, it is very difficult to track precisely. And, the longer water sits in lead pipes, the more lead it takes on, so 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.

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. Regulators must operate on the knowledge available, and we only know what the customers let us know by participating in the City's testing.