
From: Calley **PPI**
Sent: Thursday, December 24, 2015 10:06 AM
To: Baird, Richard (GOV)
Cc: Holland, Meegan (GOV); Hollins, Harvey (GOV); Posthumus, Dick (GOV); Redford, James (GOV); Walsh, John (GOV); Clement, Elizabeth (GOV); Agen, Jarrod (GOV)
Subject: Re: Please provide feedback: Governor's statement on Flint water crisis

I totally agree with going so far as to specifically apologize. I also like Rich's suggestions. The statement should convey three main points: 1) very sorry with no excuses 2) open and transparent 3) urgency in action steps going forward.

I think this statement accomplishes those goals.

On Dec 24, 2015, at 9:53 AM, Baird, Richard (GOV) <bairdr@michigan.gov> wrote:

This is the best narrative I have seen that actually describes how we feel about the situation and our resolve to make things right. A few thoughts:

We might think about a "lead in" to your second para in the statement. Something like "The bi-partisan task force has worked tirelessly to interview Flint, Genesee County, State and Federal officials and complete an independent fact based analysis. They have reviewed hundreds of documents at all levels of government and from the public health science community and continue to do so.

Para 3 might unintentionally suggest that there are public health stakeholders who are not as serious as the governor. This may be an overreach, but may I suggest

"When it comes to matters of health and quality of life, there is simply no room for error in testing for lead and other toxins. I understand there can be disagreements within the scientific community. That is why I have directed my Directors of MDEQ and DHHS to invite every external scientist who has worked on the Flint water issue to the state laboratory facilities to work as partners with us. Together, we should be able to affirm that every testing protocol and conclusion validates that Flint citizens will have safe drinking water, and that we are doing everything possible to ensure proper monitoring and remediation of blood levels and physical or neurological impacts over the long term. And I want the Flint community and all citizens of Michigan to know how very sorry I am that this has happened."

Nick and Dan might not like the "invite" but I spoken with them both and they of course will support whatever the Boss decides.

Thanks,

Rich

Sent from my iPad

On Dec 24, 2015, at 7:41 AM, Holland, Meegan (GOV) <HollandM7@michigan.gov> wrote:

Colleagues:

Many of us have reached the conclusion that our messaging on the Flint water crisis has room for improvement. We haven't conveyed to citizens the depth of our concern over the situation. I've crafted a statement to be made by the Governor, and would like you to review it.

This statement is meant to manage expectations on the timing of concrete conclusions (the task force report may not come out for another month at least) and to signal that action may come sooner than that (we plan to reach out to Mayor Weaver, for example, and perhaps hold a press conference with her in January announcing some next steps).

Here is the statement:

"I've been briefed on the recent meeting of the task force studying the Flint water situation and I've read the report from the Office of the Auditor General on the processes used by DEQ to monitor Flint water.

"No matter what the testing requirements were, they were not enough to prevent this crisis. I want Michigan to be the state that is known for the safest water in the nation. "I'd like to thank the task force for keeping me apprised of their continuing investigation. As they uncover more facts, it's clear to me we can do better. The report may take another month or so, but if we need to make changes more swiftly, I plan to take immediate action.

"The bottom line is we'll take responsibility for our part in Flint's water crisis. I'm committed to partnering with all of the stakeholders who are as concerned about public health as I am. I vow to make sure that Flint citizens will have safe drinking water. And I'm so very sorry that this happened.

"But I know an apology isn't enough. We've already allocated \$10 million to test the water, distribute water filters, and help in other ways. On Thursday, I called Flint Mayor Karen Weaver, and we're going to sit down in the next week to discuss other ways the state can offer assistance.

"What happened in Flint is inexcusable. I want to assure residents there that we will work hard to make things right."

Thank you,
Meegan

Meegan Holland
Director of Communications for Gov. Rick Snyder
Office: 517-335-6397

PPI

Twitter: @meholland