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Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2015 4:36 PM
To: Murray, David (GOV); hollandm2@michigan.org; Hollins, Harvey (GOV)
Subject: Fw: FWATF letter to Governor Snyder
Attachments: FWATF-Snyder Letter 12-29-15.pdf

FYI

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FWATF Finds MDEQ Primarily Responsible For Flint Water Crisis

Lansing, MI—The Flint Water Advisory Task Force today released a letter sent to Governor Rick Snyder advising him of the Task Force's finding that the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality is primarily responsible for failing to ensure safe drinking water in Flint and must be held accountable. A copy of the letter is attached.

The FWATF letter stated in part:

“We believe the primary responsibility for what happened in Flint rests with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). Although many individuals and entities at state and local levels contributed to creating and prolonging the problem, MDEQ is the government agency that has responsibility to ensure safe drinking water in Michigan. It failed in that responsibility and must be held accountable for that failure.”

“...we believe that establishing responsibility is a critical and urgent need, and one that should not wait for our final report in 2016. Individuals and agencies responsible must be held accountable in a timely fashion.”

“The City of Flint’s water customers—fellow Michigan citizens—were needlessly and tragically exposed to toxic levels of lead through their drinking water supply. They deserve a commitment to properly assess responsibility and ensure accountability. They also deserve a commitment to needed mitigation in both the short and long term. The Flint water crisis never should have happened. Having failed to prevent it, state government should coordinate a sustained, public-health-focused response to remedy, to the fullest extent possible, the impacts on the Flint community.”

The letter outlined three areas where MDEQ failed:

- Regulatory Failure
- Failure in Substance and Tone of MDEQ Response to the Public
- Failure in MDEQ Interpretation of the Lead and Copper Rule

“Flint residents were exposed to toxic levels of lead in their water primarily due to a regulatory culture of passive technical compliance that is simply insufficient to the task of public protection,” FWATF Co-Chair Ken Sikkema said. “We also believe that the dismissive and disrespectful tone of much of the MDEQ’s response to public concerns is unacceptable.”

“The failure to protect the public will have lifelong consequences.” FWATF Co-Chair Chris Kolb said. “It will be important going forward for long term support to be provided to Flint residents unnecessarily hurt by using City water.”

“We believe that as the Great Lakes State, Michigan should aspire to have the safest drinking water in the nation, rather than merely aiming for technical compliance with regulatory requirements,” Kolb and Sikkema added. “Our final report will make recommendations that will help make this aspiration a reality.”

This is the second letter sent by the Task Force. The first, sent earlier this month, made several recommendations concerning coordination of state efforts that were supported and implemented by Governor Snyder.