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For Immediate Release

City of Flint Officially Begins Using Flint River as Temporary Primary Water Source

Flint, Michigan – April 25, 2014 – For the first time in fifty years, the City of Flint is using the Flint River—part of the Saginaw River watershed—as a primary water source for city residents. Today the valve to the pipeline from Detroit was closed and the Flint River officially became Flint’s water supply. The temporary switchover is scheduled to support the city’s primary water needs for the next two years while construction of the forthcoming pipeline from Lake Huron is completed by Karegnondi Water Authority. Officials from the City of Flint, the Genesee County Drain Commission and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality were all on hand to witness the historic event.

The Flint River was once the primary source of water for city residents up to the 1960s. Over the past 40 years, it has provided water to city residents as a back-up to water provided to us by Detroit. During our partnership with Detroit, Flint has had to transition to the use of the Flint River for residential water on a few different occasions, with the most recent temporary switchover happening in 2009. Each temporary stint on local water proved three things to city employees and residents alike: That a transition to local river water could be done seamlessly, and that it was both sensible and safe for us to use our own water as a primary water source in Flint.

Even with a proven track record of providing perfectly good water for Flint, there still remains lingering uncertainty about the quality of the water. In an effort to dispel myths and promote the truth about the Flint River and its viability as a residential water resource, there have been numerous studies and tests conducted on its water by several different independent organizations. In addition to what has been found in independent

studies, it is also the responsibility of the City of Flint Water Service Center to continually test the water provided to city residents. Michael Prysby of the Michigan DEQ Office of Drinking Water verified that “the quality of the water being put out meets all of our drinking water standards and Flint water is safe to drink.”

For nearly 10 years Mike Glasgow has worked in the laboratory at the City of Flint Water Service Center. He has run countless tests on our drinking water to ensure its safety for public use. Mike has not only conducted tests on water provided to us by Detroit, but also on local water from nearby rivers, lakes and streams including the Flint River. When asked if over the last decade if he has seen any abnormalities of major concern in the water, his response was an emphatic, “No.” In his words, “there has been nothing seen that was of major concern,” during his ongoing tenure working in the lab. “The tests results have shown that our water is not only safe, but of the high quality that Flint customers have come to expect,” announced DPW Director Howard Croft, “we are proud of the end result.”

Apart from the water plant’s devotion to ensuring that our water is good, Flint is doubly blessed in having the Flint River Watershed Coalition as a separate organization dedicated to monitoring the overall welfare of local bodies of water, overseeing more than 30 different nearby locations. Rebecca Fedewa has been director of the watershed coalition since 2008. By virtue of her passion for her work and her position on the board, she is very conversant with the condition of the Flint River. In her words, “The Flint River is increasingly healthy, and completely suitable as a drinking water source.” Fedewa and FRWC are working closely with the city “to monitor flows and habitats between the intake and the waste water treatment plant to ensure there are minimal to no impacts to the overall health of the river.”

FRWC also invites city residents to be a part of their monitoring exercises during this spring in order “to gain firsthand knowledge in the health and vitality of our Flint River.” Mayor Dayne Walling invited everyone at today’s event to toast to Flint’s water. “It’s regular, good, pure drinking water, and it’s right in our backyard,” said Mayor Walling, “this is the first step in the right direction for Flint, as we take this monumental step forward in controlling the future of our community’s most precious resource.”

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