

**Opening Statement of the Honorable John Shimkus  
Subcommittees on Health, Environment and the Economy  
Hearing on the Flint Water Crisis: Impacts and Lessons Learned  
April 13, 2016**

*(As Prepared for Delivery)*

At one level I am glad we are looking into the tragedy in Flint, Michigan and on another one I am saddened and disappointed that it even happened in the first place.

The drinking water crisis that the residents of Flint, Michigan have had to endure has been called a tragedy so much that the word loses its meaning.

I know there have been concerted efforts to assign blame for these problems and other congressional committees have spent time trying to look into who caused this or didn't do enough to stop it. I have decided there are very few "white hats" in this picture. Flint was let down by its Federal and state government, and its local officials and the residents there are right to be skeptical.

We need to look into what is being done to make this situation better, delve into what the schedule looks like to restore good drinking water to folks, and what the long-term plan is to take care of the health and infrastructure of Flint. Ultimately, we need to ensure coordination, openness, and cooperation between government, water utilities, and the public fuel confidence in the work being done.

As part of this examination, we should appreciate what changes the Environmental Protection Agency is considering as part of its Long-Term revisions to the Lead and Copper Rule. I recognize EPA has been getting input from the National Drinking Water Advisory Council and others, but we should examine what the impact of some of those decisions might have on communities.

We all want to protect public health, but there are a finite amount of resources – Federal, state, and local, and private – that can be brought to bear to address all issues. We need to prioritize the public health benefits we are addressing and getting. We want appropriate attention placed on this issue, but not at the expense of addressing other pressing public issues.

I want to thank all our witnesses for joining us today to give us their perspective. I want to welcome back Mr. Estes-Smargiassi who testified on lead service lines six years ago before this committee.

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