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LANSING



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Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's Answers to Questions Posed by Members of the Committee on Energy and Commerce

The Honorable Susan Brooks

Question 1. How do the U.S. EPA and environmental state agencies educate homeowners, businesses, and schools on what their responsibilities are when it comes to water-related infrastructure – whether it's in the ground or internal infrastructure, such as old faucets and drinking fountains?

Answer 1. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) has implemented a comprehensive education and outreach program for the residents of the City of Flint (Flint). The goal of the program is to increase the residents' awareness of lead exposure risks with respect to the plumbing in their homes and the service lines that connect their homes to the water main. The MDEQ is utilizing a five-prong approach to sampling, which includes the following:

- Residential testing,
- School testing (which includes daycares and other at risk populations),
- Food establishments
- Elevated blood lead investigations, and
- Sentinel testing.

Each testing program is designed to target a specific area of concern in Flint so that residents will receive comprehensive protection. A detailed explanation of the five-prong plan is attached. In addition, the MDEQ has "high lead" investigation teams that conduct visits to those homes with over 100 parts per billion (ppb) of lead or over 1,300 ppb of copper. The teams consist of:

- a representative of the MDEQ,
- a representative of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS),
- a professional plumber from Local Union 370, and
- a member of the community.

The investigation teams:

- provide residents with information on what the test results mean,
- ensure that the residents know how to properly install and maintain the filter units that are provided at no cost,
- conduct an inspection to determine the material of the service line entering the home,
- provide information on aerator cleaning,
- provide nutritional information, and
- provide information on additional services that are available.

The MDEQ is also conducting an ongoing series of town hall meetings in a variety of settings such as churches, community centers, schools, and elder care facilities. These forums offer residents the opportunity to ask questions on a wide variety of topics related to the lead exposure. The MDEQ has also formally and publicly presented on topics such as the importance of flushing water lines in the home to reduce particulates and to accelerate the reestablishment of the protective layer in the pipes.

Every other Friday, the MDEQ participates in two key meetings: one with the Flint Water Interagency Coordinating Committee (FWICC) and the second with Mission Flint. The FWICC includes members from several State of Michigan departments, Flint, as well as representatives of different community groups and the scientific community. The purpose of the FWICC is to coordinate the efforts of the various partners to create a consensus addressing the lead exposure. The Mission Flint meetings are designed to interact with various groups in the community to learn and respond to their needs.

The MDEQ also educates the public regarding infrastructure concerns using handouts that have been created to help explain issues, such as what to do if construction is occurring nearby, how to reduce potential lead exposure, how to reoccupy a residence that has been unoccupied for an extended period of time, and how particulate lead can affect sample results.

Question 2. What is your agency doing to inform the public of best practices when they have lead service pipes delivering water to their homes?

Answer 2. One of the challenges regarding the service lines is that Flint's records are not always accurate or complete regarding the material composition of the home service line. The MDEQ has led a door-to-door campaign to identify the material of the home service lines. As lead service lines are identified, the MDEQ representatives inform residents of their findings and review the recommended precautionary measures to ensure that residents understand the precautions and have the necessary commodities to implement the relevant recommendations. The MDEQ provides commodities such as filters, cartridges, and bottled water to Flint residents without charge.

The State of Michigan is working with communities outside of Flint by providing recommendations on compliance testing for the federal Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) and how to deal with issues related to lead service lines. A copy of the March 14, 2016, memo from the MDEQ to community water supplies discussing these recommendations is attached.

In addition to this memo, the MDEQ is developing recommendations concerning the federal LCR and has put together a guidance document for testing in schools on a statewide basis. A copy of the draft protocol is attached.

The Honorable Paul Tonko

Question 1. Is there a reliable inventory of lead service lines in Flint? If not, will the creation of such an inventory be part of Flint's replacement program?

Answer 1. The field investigations conducted by the MDEQ have shown that the service line material inventory is not always accurate. The MDEQ created a database to document what has been verified by physical inspection. The MDEQ is working with the University of Michigan, Michigan State Police, and Flint to create an accurate representation of service line materials and to map this data in GIS to assist Flint in its decisions relating to the service line removal program.

Question 2. Has work been done to help Flint make information on the location of lead service lines publicly available to residents? Is that information accessible digitally?

Answer 2. The identification of service line material composition is ongoing. As this information is collected, it is being incorporated into a database that will be shared with Flint.

Question 3. I have seen cost estimates of about \$5,000 per replacement of a lead service line. How much has the State of Michigan allocated to complete lead line replacement in Flint? Is that amount going to be sufficient based on existing estimates of the number of lead lines and the cost of replacement?

Answer 3. The State of Michigan provided Flint \$2 million for the replacement of lead service lines. Another \$25 million is awaiting final action in the Michigan House of Representatives for this project. Rowe Engineering recently completed a pilot service line replacement program, through which Rowe replaced 33 different service lines and developed best practices to reduce costs associated with service line removal. A copy of the Rowe Pilot Program Report is attached. The amount of money necessary to replace lead service lines is still to be determined and will be based on the results of the field investigations and other efforts to determine the accuracy of service line records.

Question 4. Is there an intention to follow the Flint Water Advisory Task Force's recommendation to prohibit partial line replacements? If so, what is being done to help homeowners that cannot afford the cost of replacing their line? Are additional protections or outreach protocols being developed to assist low-income homeowners or renters that might not be able to make the financial decisions or investments necessary for their privately owned portion of the line?

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Answer 4. The MDEQ is opposed to partial service line replacement and has provided guidance to community water supplies against this practice. A memo from the MDEQ dated March 14, 2016 to community water supplies addressing this issue is attached. The State of Michigan is providing funds to Flint for the full replacement of lead service lines. In addition, notification is being provided to neighbors when service lines are being replaced so that they can take precautionary measures. Samples are taken both before and after service line replacements, and residents are instructed to ensure that they continue to use filtered water for a minimum of 3 months after the replacement of a service line.

The Honorable Lois Capps

These questions will be answered by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: 5 Prong Sampling Plan

Attachment 2: Sygo Letter to Community Water Supplies

Attachment 3: Sampling Guidance for Schools and Daycares

Attachment 4: Rowe Engineering Report