



Columbiana County Health District

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Awarded 2022

April 21, 2023

Congressman Bill Johnson, Chairman
Subcommittee on Environment, Manufacturing and Critical Materials
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6115

RE: Response to March 28, 2023 Hearing Questions

Dear Congressman Johnson,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify during the March 28, 2023 hearing entitled “Government Response to East Palestine: Ensuring Safety and Transparency for the Community” that was held before the Committee on Energy and Commerce’s Subcommittee on Environment, Manufacturing and Critical Materials on March 28, 2023.

I am in receipt of your April 12, 2023 request to respond to questions and consistent with that request I am providing the following responses:

The Honorable Bill Johnson

- 1. The residents of East Palestine have been repeatedly told that the air in the community is safe to breathe and the water is safe to drink. Can you explain how the U.S. EPA, Ohio EPA and the Columbiana County Health District reach this conclusion?**

Response: The Columbiana County Health District has focused on private drinking water wells and our sampling of these wells has not yet indicated that the drinking water has been impacted by the train derailment.

- 2. Your testimony focuses on the testing of private water wells in and around East Palestine.**
 - a. How many residents of East Palestine and the surrounding communities rely on drinking water from private wells?**

Response: All area residents rely on private wells except for those served by the municipal water system in the Village of East Palestine. Based on the established priority areas, we have estimated that there 250-300 homes with private wells.



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b. How many private wells have been tested so far?

Response: As of the date of this response, the Columbiana County Health District has collected 348 total private drinking water samples which includes 212 first round samples 128 second round samples and 8 third round samples.

c. How many private wells are you concerned about testing going forward?

Response: Based on the established priority areas, we have estimated that there 250-300 homes with private wells and the ongoing sampling of these wells is necessary to ensure residents are consuming water that meets drinking water standards.

d. Have you received any resistance from residents to the testing of private wells?

Response: The private well sampling program is voluntary and most residents have requested to have their wells sampled to provide them comfort in knowing their drinking water has not been impacted by the contamination from the train derailment. Residents are very pleased to have local health district staff sample their family's drinking water and routinely ask for us to continue sampling their water in the future.

I hope that you and the Subcommittee find my responses helpful and meaningful in the ongoing discussions regarding the East Palestine derailment activities and the future monitoring efforts that will best serve the residents of the East Palestine area. Should additional question arise, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Thank you again for the opportunity to represent the residents of the East Palestine area.

Sincerely,

Dr. Wesley J. Vins, DPA
Health Commissioner