

DELIVER TO THE GOVERNOR OF MICHIGAN

Letter to Michigan Director of Environmental Quality

Background: Attached are excerpts from a letter sent to the Michigan Director of Environmental Quality by the Environmental Protection Agency during the Flint Water Crisis in 2016. The following letter indicates expectations (given by the national government) for the leaders of the state of Michigan to act upon and rebound from the crisis going forward.

Dear Director:

There is no higher priority for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency than protecting public health and ensuring the safety of our nation's drinking water. Under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), Michigan and other states have the primary responsibility for the implementation and enforcement of drinking water regulations, while the EPA is tasked with oversight of state efforts. Recent events in Flint, Michigan, and other U.S. cities, have led to important discussions about the safety of our nation's drinking water supplies. I am writing today to ask you to join in taking action to strengthen our safe drinking water programs, consistent with our shared recognition of the critical importance of safe drinking water for the health of all Americans.

...we need to work together to ensure that states are taking action to demonstrate that the Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) is being properly implemented... EPA staff are meeting with every state drinking water program across the country to ensure that states are taking appropriate actions to address lead action level exceedances... I ask you to join us in giving these efforts the highest priority.

...to assure the public of our shared commitment to addressing lead risks... I urge you to take near-term action in the following areas:

- ...Use relevant EPA guidance on LCR sampling protocols and procedures for optimizing corrosion control.
- ...Work with public water systems - with a priority emphasis on large systems - to increase transparency in implementation of the LCR by posting on their public website and/or on your agency's website.

...Enhance efforts to ensure that residents promptly receive lead sampling results from their homes, together with clear information on lead risks and how to abate them, and that the general public receives prompt information on high lead levels in drinking water systems.

These actions are essential to restoring public confidence in our shared work to ensure safe drinking water for the American people. I ask you for your leadership and partnership in this effort and request that you respond in writing, within the next 30 days, to provide information on your activities in these areas.

While we have an immediate focus on lead in drinking water, we recognize that protection of the nation's drinking water involves both legacy and emerging contaminants, and a much broader set of scientific, technical and resource challenges as well as opportunities. This is a shared responsibility involving state, tribal, local and federal governments, system owners and operators, consumers and other stakeholders. Accordingly, in the coming weeks and months, we will be working with states and other stakeholders to identify strategies and actions to improve the safety and sustainability of our drinking water systems, including:

- ensuring adequate and sustained investment in, and attention to, regulatory oversight at all levels of government;
- using information technology to enhance transparency and accountability with regard to reporting and public availability of drinking water compliance data;
- leveraging funding sources to finance maintenance, upgrading and replacement of aging infrastructure, especially for poor and overburdened communities; and
- identifying technology and infrastructure to address both existing and emerging contaminants.

Thank you in advance for your support to ensure that we are fulfilling our joint responsibility for the protection of public health and to restore public confidence in our shared work to ensure safe drinking water for the American people.