



January 18, 2017

Statement from Great Lakes Water Authority CEO Sue McCormick regarding the principle cause of taste and odor concerns in the water in several Downriver communities

“After a thorough review, GLWA has identified the principle cause of the taste and odor issue that several Downriver communities have been experiencing since late last week. The Authority has also established protocols that will prevent the issue from occurring again.

At no time were there any health or safety concerns.

It should be noted that throughout the entire taste and odor situation, the GLWA Water Quality Team has been conducting not only standard bacteriological testing, but also additional testing for toxicity and volatile organic chemicals. All test results have met the EPA’s Safe Drinking Water Act Regulatory standards.

The Authority’s Southwest Water Treatment Facility (SW Facility) is the primary location from which Downriver communities are served, and therefore our investigation began at that facility.

GLWA has concluded that the SW Facility experienced a temporary spike in turbidity levels (water with a significant amount of particulates) in the water at the beginning of the treatment process and associated with the normal cleaning of its settling basins.

Once staff determined that the cleaning of the settling basins could be a contributing factor to the taste and odor issues, the cleaning of the basins was immediately stopped (approximately noon on Thursday, January 12, 2017). However, some of the water treated during this timeframe left the plant and entered the distribution system with sulfurous tastes and odors.

Facility staff then began feeding powdered activated carbon into the system to help mitigate the issue and begin to bring relief to our customer communities. Staff also instituted an enhanced schedule of water quality testing to ensure that there is not a reoccurrence of the taste and odor issue.

These actions have resulted in a significant decrease in the number of complaints being received by GLWA.

In order to assure complete mitigation of the issue, on Monday, GLWA began implementation of a systematic flushing plan to clear the remainder of the water treated during the cleaning of the settling basins from its system. Staff will continue flushing until the situation is resolved.

The Authority is also reaching out to affected customer communities to offer assistance in flushing out their local systems. GLWA will cover the cost of any volume increases associated with flushing activities in the impacted communities.

GLWA remains committed to providing our customer communities with water of unquestionable quality.”