



Florida Department of Environmental Protection

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Rick Scott
Governor

Carlos Lopez-Cantera
Lt. Governor

Jonathan P. Steverson
Secretary

March 30, 2016

Mr. Joel Beauvais
Deputy Assistant Administrator
Office of Water
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Mail Code 4101M
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Deputy Administrator Beauvais:

As Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, I take very seriously the Department's obligation to protect the public's health and drinking water supplies. Specifically, in response to your letter of February 29, 2016, I would note that Department staff work diligently to implement the Florida Safe Drinking Water Act, found in sections 403.850-.8645, Florida Statutes, to protect Florida's drinking water supplies. In fact, your Region IV staff has been very complimentary of my drinking water staff.

With the recent attention focused on drinking water systems, specifically lead in drinking water, Department staff has reevaluated Florida's lead sampling data from the point of entry into the distribution system. Also, Department staff has revisited every action level exceedance under the federal Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) since 2012. These actions were taken to verify that the Department has not overlooked any potential issues and has provided the necessary oversight of drinking water systems to ensure the public's health.

During that period, Florida reported only one violation of the lead drinking water standard at the point of entry into the system. That was a result of an antiquated spigot being used to take the samples at the water facility. For historical action level exceedances, Department staff has ensured that these systems have had at least two bi-annual sampling events under the action level since the original exceedance. For more current action level exceedances, Department staff is working diligently with those utilities to ensure that the exceedance is dealt with expeditiously. As part of this review, the Department has confirmed that issues typically arise due to legacy plumbing and fixtures rather than the water being provided by the utility.

As a result of this work, I am confident that Florida's drinking water systems provide high quality water as it enters the distribution system. The Department works hard to preserve the quality of Florida's drinking water, and Department staff actively pursues action level exceedances if they occur.

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The Department has been, and remains, fully committed to properly implementing EPA's LCR, which the Department has adopted by reference in Rule 62-550.800, Florida Administrative Code. When appropriate, Department staff seeks guidance from EPA Region IV. To that end, my staff initiated discussions with Region IV several weeks ago regarding LCR implementation, including the issue of corrosion control and related EPA guidance documents.

In addition, we are currently reviewing our website and other protocols for the collection, storage and reporting of LCR data, as well as the expeditious, proactive provision of information relating to lead and copper to the public to make sure that this information is supplied to the public as quickly as possible.

Through these efforts, the Department will continue to identify ways to best serve the citizens of Florida and protect public health. Of course, as noted above, when action level exceedances are triggered under the LCR, we will maintain our high level of effort. In support of this, Department staff and the utilities often work very closely with the Florida Rural Water Association, an association funded through the Department and dedicated to assisting small systems in Florida.

While this letter has focused on lead in drinking water, the Department also maintains its vigilance in protecting Florida's drinking water from all other contaminants, and we routinely seek new and improved ways to ensure compliance with drinking water standards. To that end, should you have any questions about Florida's implementation of the LCR, or any other aspect of Florida's drinking water program, please contact Fred Aschauer, Director of the Division of Water Resource Management, at (850) 245-8035, or via email at Fred.Aschauer@dep.state.fl.us.

Sincerely,



Jonathan P. Steverson
Secretary