



Press Release

City of Detroit • Mike Duggan, Mayor

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Lead Sampling Confirms City's Water Continues to Meet EPA Lead Safety Standards

- DWSD uses new protocol for Lead and Copper Sampling in anticipation of more stringent federal and state standards for drinking water quality
- Department tested water samples one year ahead of requirement by EPA

DETROIT – The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department's (DWSD) recent lead sampling found that the city's drinking water continues to be well within EPA standards for the presence of lead. While results have not yet been certified by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), the testing was performed a year earlier than required and was managed in cooperation with the Great Lakes Water Authority water quality unit.

The water quality sampling was conducted from June through September, 2016. The preliminary results show that the 90th percentile for lead is at 4.5 parts per billion (ppb) – well below the EPA standard of 15 ppb. DWSD verified that lead service lines were present before instructing residents to use new sampling protocols recommended by MDEQ. In previous test periods, residents were instructed to flush their water, leave water unused for a minimum of 6 hours, and then collect the water sample for analysis. Under the MDEQ's new sampling protocol, water is not flushed from the lines, and the water is collected after the minimum of six hour stagnation period.

DWSD is required by the EPA and MDEQ to conduct Lead and Copper Rule sampling every three years. The regulation also states a water utility must resample homes tested in past sampling periods. In addition to 47 previously sampled homes, DWSD sought new volunteers to participate in the testing who met at least one of the following criteria:

- Lead service lines.
- Copper piping with lead solder installed between 1983 and 1986.
- Lead plumbing.

“Detroit's drinking water is widely regarded as one of the highest quality in the country,” said Gary Brown, DWSD director. “We have been a model for other water utilities around the country. My home has a lead service line and my family and I along with my grandchildren continue to drink water from our tap. I remain confident that our drinking water is safe.” Brown continues, “While the EPA requires that homes are tested every three years, we took a proactive stance and tested homes in advance of the

mandated period in an effort to assess the potential for lead in drinking water to ensure our customers continue to receive safe drinking water.”

The Detroit Health Department has partnered with DWSD collaborating on lead and lead exposure matters.

"Rigorous, proactive testing shows that Detroit water is safe and meets federal and State standards for lead," said Dr. Abdul El-Sayed, Executive Director and Health Officer for the Detroit Health Department. "Protecting our children's health is our number one priority and we will continue to remain vigilant in protecting them wherever possible."

To design a program that ensures consumers are protected from lead in drinking water, DWSD has contracted with Elin Betanzo, Senior Policy Analyst for the Northeast-Midwest Institute. Betanzo is an engineer and certified water operator who directed the lead sampling program.

Both DWSD Director, Gary Brown and Dr. Abdul El-Sayed are available for further comments.

About The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department

The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department serves 200,000 residential and commercial customer accounts, nearly 700,000 individuals. DWSD's water network consists of more than 2,700 miles of transmission and distribution mains and nearly 3,000 miles of sewer collection piping.

To learn more about the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department or to request water services, make payments, or report water problems, call DWSD Customer Care at 313-964-9300 or contact us at: www.detroitmi.gov/dwsd.

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