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### DNRE Air Monitoring Finds Elevated Lead Levels in Belding

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment announced today that air monitoring in Belding has identified higher than acceptable levels of lead in the air, and that a local company has been identified as the source of the emissions and is in the process of upgrading emissions control equipment.

The national ambient air quality standard is set at 0.15 micrograms of lead per cubic meter as a three-month average. Recently received monitoring results through May of this year indicate three-month average values as high as 0.22 micrograms per cubic meter.

DNRE has determined that the cause of the higher lead levels is emissions from Mueller Industries, which is located approximately 60 yards west of the air monitor. The company has been issued a violation notice for excessive air emissions of lead, fine particulate matter, and hydrogen chloride that were detected during an emissions test. The company is currently upgrading their emissions control equipment at the facility to address the violations and, once completed, will then conduct further emissions testing.

“Lead exposure poses a threat to children’s development, and we will work to ensure that all areas of the state comply with the air quality standard,” said DNRE Director Rebecca Humphries. “We have notified the Ionia County Health Department and the state Department of Community Health of this situation. We will ensure that the

excessive lead, particulate matter and hydrogen chloride emissions are addressed and that the air lead levels in Belding meet the standard.”

In 2008, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reduced the standard from 1.5 to 0.15 micrograms per cubic meter. The standard was set at this level to protect children from elevated lead exposure, which can affect IQ and development. Until now, all air monitors in the state have measured levels that comply with the new, lower standard. The level of lead in the Grand Rapids area is approximately 0.01 micrograms per cubic meter. The monitor in Belding began operation in January 2010 because the EPA required states to monitor near sources that emit over one ton of lead per year.

According to the Michigan Department of Community Health, while the lead levels in Belding exceed air standards they do not represent a significant risk to human health and they do not require citizens to take precautionary measures at this time. Research has shown that for children, the greater danger to the toxic effects of lead comes from exposure to lead based painted surfaces in older (pre 1978) homes.

Parents can find more information about lead, its impact on children and childhood lead poisoning by contacting the Michigan Department of Community Health Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 1-888-322-4453 or [www.michigan.gov/leadsafe](http://www.michigan.gov/leadsafe). Parents who want their children tested for lead should contact their primary care physician or the Ionia County Health Department.

*The Department of Natural Resources and Environment is committed to the conservation, protection, management, and accessible use and enjoyment of the state's*

*environment, natural resources and related economic interests for current and future generations. Learn more at [www.michigan.gov/dnre](http://www.michigan.gov/dnre).*