



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
LANSING



C. HEIDI GREETHER
DIRECTOR

December 7, 2016

VIA E-MAIL

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Flint, Michigan 48502

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University of Michigan-Flint
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Chief Executive Officer
United Way of Genesee County
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Dear Mr. Lindsey, Dr. Borrego, Ms. Horton, and Mr. Gaskin:

SUBJECT: Flint Water Pilot Project Report

Thank you for your letter dated November 21, 2016, to Governor Rick Snyder regarding recommendations for the response efforts in Flint. Governor Snyder has referred your letter to me for response.

We appreciate you sharing your experiences, lessons learned, and recommendations. Your inclusion of your Final Report, entitled "What to Know and Do About Water Pilot Project," is helpful and highlighted important issues that will serve our joint efforts in Flint.

The city of Flint under Mayor Karen Weaver's leadership, in collaboration with the State of Michigan, is in the process of ramping up the Community Outreach and Resident Education (CORE) program. The CORE program is a door-to-door effort that provides the residents of Flint with information on how to install and maintain filters, how to change cartridges, and how to clean aerators, as well as providing information on other resources that are available. We are also in the process of incorporating a health and nutrition component in the program.

So far, the CORE program has been a success, largely because it utilizes residents to reach out to residents. Each CORE team member undergoes training to ensure they are equipped with all of the necessary information before they go out into the field. The training includes classroom presentations to ensure team members understand the information they will be providing. In addition, they also receive field training that

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provides practical experience before they are allowed to serve as the lead for a team. Teams consist of two community members who go door-to-door in a controlled and documented manner. The teams are assigned iPads so they can document the addresses of where they have been and what commodities have been provided. They also document the services that have been provided, such as filter installation.

In your letter, you expressed your concern with “making sure no one falls through the cracks.” This statement is critically important to the mission of the CORE program. We are in the process of actively seeking out CORE team members who can assist us in effectively communicating with all of the residents of Flint. This includes bringing on CORE members who are bilingual, as well as those with experience in American Sign Language. We will continue to focus our efforts in this regard to ensure language does not present a barrier in providing information and resources to the residents of Flint.

In the “Lessons Learned” portion of your report, you indicate the importance of utilizing paid team members. We completely agree with this statement. While exceptionally important and greatly appreciated, there is only so much that can be expected from volunteers. The CORE team members are currently paid through a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. This grant allows Flint residents who have been laid off within the last five years and currently do not have a full-time job the opportunity to work up to 40 hours a week for a year. The experience CORE team members gain will serve them well and provide skills they can use later in other positions.

The CORE program originated as a pilot earlier this summer and began with four community team members. Since then, it has expanded to 23 community members, and their efforts have been impressive. They have gone to over 23,000 addresses in Flint and have provided outreach and education to over 5,000 residences. Currently, the CORE program operates five days a week (Tuesday through Saturday) and the ramp-up effort will expand this to seven days a week and will include potentially 54 teams each day. In order to ensure the teams are deployed effectively, the number of coordinators will also be expanded. The plan is to have a total of 16 coordinators so that all the data collection efforts can be properly monitored and the data is reviewed to ensure completeness and accuracy.

The expanded CORE efforts are a very ambitious undertaking that will require coordination with all of our partners. We would like to take this opportunity to invite you to join our efforts in expanding the CORE program initiative.

Thank you for taking the time to share your experiences and your recommendations, and we look forward to your continued involvement with the CORE program.

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If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Bryce Feighner, Chief, Office of Drinking Water and Municipal Assistance, at 517-284-6544; feighnerb@michigan.gov; or Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), P.O. Box 30241, Lansing, Michigan 48909-7741.

Sincerely,



Keith Creagh
Director
Department of Natural Resources

cc: Governor Rick Snyder
Lt. Governor Brian Calley
Mayor Karen Weaver, City of Flint
Ms. C. Heidi Grether, Director, DEQ
Mr. Robert Wagner, Program Deputy Director, DEQ
Ms. Amy Epkey, Deputy Director, DEQ
Mr. Bryce Feighner, DEQ
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