



STATE OF MICHIGAN
EXECUTIVE OFFICE
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

BRIAN CALLEY
LT. GOVERNOR

PREPARED REMARKS ON THE FLINT WATER CRISIS

*Gov. Rick Snyder
Jan. 19, 2016 – 7 p.m.*

Tonight will be a different State of the State. There is so much we could discuss about how we can make our great state even greater, better, and stronger over the next year. But tonight I will address the crisis in Flint, first and in-depth.

To begin, I'd like to address the people of Flint. Your families face a crisis – a crisis you did not create and could not have prevented.

I want to speak directly, honestly, and sincerely to let you know we are praying for you, we are working hard for you, and we are absolutely committed to taking the right steps to effectively solve this crisis.

To you, the people of Flint, I want to say tonight—as I have before—I am sorry and I will fix it.

No citizen of this great state should endure this kind of catastrophe.

Government failed you – federal, state, and local leaders – by breaking the trust you placed in us.

I'm sorry most of all that I let you down.

You deserve better. You deserve accountability. You deserve to know that the buck stops here, with me. Most of all, you deserve to know the truth and I have a responsibility to tell you the truth. The truth about what we've done and what we'll do to overcome this challenge.

Tomorrow I will release my 2014 and 2015 emails regarding Flint to you, the citizens, so that you have answers to your questions about what we've done and what we're doing to make this right for the families of Flint. Anyone will be able to read this information for themselves at Michigan.gov/Snyder. Because the most important thing we can do right now is to work hard and work together for the people of Flint.

I know apologies won't make up for the mistakes that were made—nothing will. But, I take full responsibility to fix the problem so that it never happens again. Let me tell you what we've done so far, and what we will be doing in the coming days, weeks, months, and years to keep our commitment to you. To make Flint an even cleaner, safer, stronger city than it was before. Because that's what you and your families deserve.

We are working to do whatever we must until this crisis is resolved. The people of Flint have chosen a new mayor. And I personally commit to work hand in hand with Mayor Weaver so we can rebuild the trust that's been broken.

I have already taken steps to bring new leadership to the DEQ – these are individuals who understand the severity of the problem and who will effectively communicate to the people of our state.

For those whose mistakes contributed to this disaster, we are fully cooperating with investigations and will hold those individuals accountable. And let me be perfectly clear to all of state government. In the future, a situation like this must come to my desk immediately. No delays. No excuses. Period.

We will provide resources to help anyone and everyone that is affected. Just as we've provided since we first knew of this crisis.

In addition to emails, tonight I'm releasing a comprehensive timeline of the steps we've taken and the actions underway to solve this crisis.

Here are the facts.

1. First, this crisis began in spring 2013, when the Flint City Council voted 7-1 to buy water from Karegnondi Water Authority (KWA). Former Flint Mayor Walling supported the move, and the Emergency Manager approved the plan. DWSD provided notice of termination to be effective one-year later and, on April 25, 2014, Flint began using water from the Flint River as its interim source.
2. Second, soon after the switch from Detroit water to Flint River water, residents complained about the water – the color, the smell, rashes, and concerns with bacteria. Ultimately, localized boil water advisories were issued by the City of Flint in August and September of 2014, each lasting several days.
3. Third, the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the federal Environmental Protection Agency began communicating about lead concerns in February 2015. Sadly, both were ineffective in fully addressing and solving the problem. DEQ misinterpreted the water safety regulations and the EPA did not act with sufficient urgency to address the concerns of one of its experts about DEQ's approach and the risk of lead contamination. In May 2015, lead service lines to one residence were removed and replaced due to high lead levels. But still, they both failed to systemically identify and solve the problem.
4. Fourth, in July 2015, my office proactively asked about the quality of Flint water, test results and blood testing. The DEQ told us that Flint was in compliance with the lead and copper rule. They told us there was one concern with one house that was later corrected and that there was nothing widespread to address. The DHHS also told us that the elevated blood lead levels were to be expected because they followed a normal seasonal trend. This conclusion was later shown to be incorrect when DHHS conducted a deeper analysis of the relevant data.
5. Fifth, In August, Prof. Marc Edwards from Virginia Tech and Dr. Mona Hanna Attisha sounded an alarm about lead in Flint's water. But tragically, based on what DEQ and DHHS had seen on the ground, they initially failed to reach the same conclusion. I want to thank the Professor, the

Doctor and the Concerned Pastors of Flint for bringing light to this issue. We are actively investigating why these agencies got this so wrong.

6. Sixth, on September 28, 2015, I was first briefed on the potential scope and magnitude of the crisis on a phone call with DEQ and DHHS. On October 1, 2015, DHHS epidemiologists validated Dr. Hanna-Attisha's findings, confirming the lead problem in Flint's water supply. At this point, I immediately ordered them to develop and implement a 10-point plan that included the immediate distribution of water filters, immediate water testing in schools, and expanded water and blood testing for anyone who might be exposed. About 12,000 filters were distributed, 700 water tests and 2,000 blood tests were conducted within the first three months.
7. Seventh, on October 8, I announced that the Flint system would be reconnected to the Detroit water system to end any further damage, and later that month I announced the independent Flint Water Task Force to review the actions taken so far and to make further recommendations to address this crisis.
8. Eighth, the Task Force issued its initial actionable recommendations and identified critical problems in mid-December. Specifically, they pointed to a primary failure of leadership at the DEQ and a culture there that led to this crisis. The task force was right, and I immediately took action, appointing new leadership at the department.
9. Ninth, I declared an emergency in Flint on January 5 so that we could access additional resources and mobilize additional support, including the Michigan State Police and the National Guard. These critical resources were needed to help families get clean water and end any risk or exposure for every resident in Flint. I also requested a presidential declaration of federal emergency, which was granted. And to the members of our Congressional delegation who are here tonight, this is a challenge we must work together to solve, and we look forward to working with you to bring additional support from the federal government for the people of Flint.
10. Tenth, to date, more than 37,300 cases of water, more than 53,700 water filters, and more than 7,300 water testing kits have been distributed. More than 21,300 homes have been visited. I am increasing the support from the National Guard starting tomorrow to ensure that every house we need to visit in Flint gets visited as soon as possible. And I am appealing the president's decision not to grant a major disaster declaration. We'll continue to deliver water and filters. We will not stop working for the people of Flint until every single person has clean water every single day. No matter what.

That's why today, I made an official request to the Legislature to fund a series of immediate actions to provide everyone in Flint clean water, and care for Flint's children. In addition to the \$9 million supplemental appropriation for Flint made in October 2015, the request today is for \$28 million, with \$22.6 million from the general fund. It includes:

1. Additional bottled water, filters, and replacement filters for anyone who needs these resources.
2. Assistance for the City of Flint to help with its utility related issues.
3. Testing and replacing fixtures in schools, day care facilities, and other higher risk locations.

4. Treatment of children with high lead levels, including diagnostic testing, nurse visits, nutrition counseling and environmental assessments.
5. Services will be available for the treatment of potential behavioral health issues such as ADHD for those who have or could have had an elevated blood lead level.
6. We will also work with local primary care providers and hospitals to educate the community about toxic stress and how to identify early developmental delays.
7. Support for child and adolescent health centers and additional support for children's health care access
8. An infrastructure integrity study for pipes and connections, using outside, independent experts

An important note: this will not be the last budget request for Flint. Additional resources will be needed for water related needs, health care needs, educational needs, economic development needs, and more.

If you would also like to aid Flint, please to to HelpforFlint.com to volunteer or donate. If you are a Flint resident who needs help getting the water you need – go to HelpforFlint.com

Those are the facts of what we've done and what we're doing. But just as important to solving short-term needs are providing real long-term solutions so that nothing like this ever happens again in ANY Michigan city.

We began that process by creating the independent Flint Water Task Force and asking them to report on exactly what happened, what accountability measures must be in place, and what investments need to be implemented.

This month, I issued an Executive Order to ensure state and local leaders have everything they need to clean up the mess, and ensure anyone with lingering health concerns is quickly, compassionately, and effectively treated. I know that there will be long-term consequences – but I want you to know that we will be there with long-term solutions for as long as it takes to make this right.

There can be no excuse. When Michiganders turn on the tap, they expect and they deserve clean, safe water. It is that simple. It is that straight-forward. So that is what we will deliver.

To the families in Flint. It is my responsibility, my commitment to deliver. I give you my commitment that Michigan will not let you down again.

#####