



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

GARLIN GILCHRIST II  
LT. GOVERNOR

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE

### No. 2021-6

To: State Department Directors and Autonomous Agency Heads  
From: Governor Gretchen Whitmer  
Date: October 14, 2021  
Re: Ensuring safe drinking water for residents of Benton Harbor

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Every Michigander deserves access to safe drinking water and every community deserves lead-free pipes. For six consecutive sampling periods over the last three years, the Benton Harbor water system has failed to meet the regulatory standard for lead. While Michigan has the most stringent standard in the nation, we should expect nothing less from the state whose very boundaries are defined by the waters of the Great Lakes. My administration will continue to take every step necessary to ensure parents in Benton Harbor can give their children a glass of water with confidence. This whole-of-government response will proceed with the urgency and haste this threat demands.

Consistent with the above, and acting under sections 1 and 8 of article 5 of the Michigan Constitution of 1963, I direct the following:

1. Departments and agencies, including but not limited to the Department of Health and Human Services; the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy; the Department of Treasury; the Department of Technology, Management and Budget; and the Michigan State Police, must expeditiously take all appropriate action to ensure residents of Benton Harbor have access to safe drinking water, working in coordination with the City of Benton Harbor (“the city”), Berrien County, local and federal partners, local community organizations, and private sector partners.
2. Departments and agencies must expeditiously take all appropriate action to ensure residents of Benton Harbor have immediate access to free bottled water for consumption through distribution sites and drop-off delivery until further notice.
3. Departments and agencies must expeditiously take all appropriate action to provide residents of Benton Harbor with free or low-cost lead-related services, including but not limited to health care.

4. Departments and agencies must expeditiously take all appropriate action to leverage available state resources to support the city in replacing lead service lines, including through investing financial resources; supporting the city in efforts to secure financial grants from the federal government; providing technical assistance to support the community's needs to manage resources and infrastructure projects; and assisting the city with contracting, procurement, and financing related to the accelerated water infrastructure upgrade work.
5. Departments and agencies must expeditiously take all appropriate action, in coordination with federal and local partners, to encourage and assist homeowners in Benton Harbor to replace lead pipes in their homes.
6. Departments and agencies must expeditiously take all appropriate action to ensure that information about their work is communicated to residents of Benton Harbor and that residents have access to clear and up-to-date information about the harmful effects of lead exposure, including the effects of lead in drinking water on vulnerable populations, the replacement of lead service lines, and lead data results for their community.
7. Finally, departments and agencies must expeditiously take all appropriate action to ensure their work is coordinated with each other and with the city, Berrien County, and local and federal partners.

This directive is effective immediately.

Thank you for your cooperation in implementing this directive.



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Gretchen Whitmer  
Governor