

July 18, 2023

Ellis Mitchell, City Manager
City of Benton Harbor
200 East Wall Street
Benton Harbor, MI 49022

**Re: Water Filtration Plant
Reservoir Inspection and High Service Suction Well Maintenance**

Dear Mr. Mitchell:

EGLE is requesting an updated timeline for the completion of the Finished Water Reservoir and High Service Suction Well repairs. This letter is to provide a summary of the inspection work and provide a timeline for completing the work.

In January 2023, Solomon Diving performed an underwater inspection of the Finished Water Reservoir and High Service Suction Well at the WFP. During the inspection, sediment on the bottom of the reservoir was stirred up, limiting the scope of the inspection until the reservoir can be cleaned. Operations staff also attempted to exercise the influent and effluent valves in the reservoir, but the valves were not able to isolate the reservoir. Additionally, some cracks were identified in the High Service Suction Well which should be repaired to extend the life of the concrete.

Following a review of the inspection report, WFP operations staff and EGLE generally agreed that completing the reservoir inspection and the identified improvements were not critical to producing safe drinking water at the WFP. Additionally, it was generally agreed that the WFP would need to be taken out of service to complete the inspection and address deficiencies identified during the inspection.

To take the WFP out of service, water will need to be supplied to the City from the City of St. Joseph utilizing the interconnect between the two systems. Following meetings with representatives from St. Joseph and Benton Harbor, it was agreed that careful planning will be required to maintain the safety and reliability of both systems and the following items will need to be considered prior to utilizing the interconnect:

- The City of St. Joseph does not currently add phosphate to its drinking water. EGLE will require a phosphate feed system be installed at the interconnect.
- Operation of the interconnect will need to be completed in a way to prevent water from Benton Harbor's system from entering St. Joseph's system due to the phosphate in Benton Harbor's system.
- The City of St. Joseph is currently in process of completing major improvements to its Water Treatment Plant with a target completion date of June 2024. Planned use of the interconnect will not be allowed until this work is complete.
- The City of St. Joseph would prefer the work to be completed from December 2024 – February 2025 when there is less demand on the system.

Based on the discussions with the City of St. Joseph, it is recommended that the City propose the reservoir inspection and concrete repair in the High Service Suction Well be completed by February 28, 2025.

FLEIS & VANDENBRINK

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Vander Ploeg', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mike Vander Ploeg, PE
Project Manager