

April 2, 2009

**To: Northeast Highland Township Water Supply Customers**

**Re: Important Information about your Drinking Water**

The Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner's office (WRC), previously known as the Oakland County Drain Commissioner's office, operates and maintains the Northeast Highland Township water supply system. As such, we routinely monitor for the presence of drinking water contaminants at the well houses and in the distribution system. You are currently part of the Northeast Highland Township Water Supply System which consists of three well sites that can provide water to the system. Huntwood Place is the primary well site and provides the majority of the water (98%) to the system. Bretton Oaks (1%) and Axford Acres (1%) sites serve as backup and only provide water to the system during high demand periods (i.e. to meet summer sprinkling demands). These backup sites provide little to no water during the non-sprinkling months (mid-September through mid-May each year).

Testing results from the Axford Acres well site received in 2008 and 2009 (to date) indicate a level of arsenic concentration higher than the regulatory limit. The drinking water standard for arsenic is 10 parts per billion (ppb). All Axford Acres arsenic sample results prior to 2008 were less than 10 ppb. The running annual average in 2008 and 2009 is 24 ppb.

#### **What does this mean?**

Erosion of natural deposits is one of the major sources of arsenic in drinking water. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) arsenic standard balances the current understanding of arsenic's possible health effects against the costs of removing arsenic from drinking water. EPA continues to research the health effects of low levels of arsenic, which is a mineral known to cause cancer in humans at high concentrations and is linked to other health effects such as skin damage and circulatory problems. Additional information is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800-426-4791.

Water from the Axford Acres well site now exceeds the arsenic maximum contaminant level (MCL) allowed in drinking water. Pumping from this site to the water system would increase the arsenic concentration in the drinking water, put the water system out of compliance with drinking water regulations and require issuance of a public notice, along with the possibility of fines, etc.

#### **What is being done?**

Highland Township and the WRC have reviewed short and long-term measures to address this situation. As a short-term solution, mandatory outdoor water use restrictions will be issued for 2009. By following these restrictions, Huntwood Place wells (with Bretton Oaks as a backup) should meet the water system demands. Axford Acres well site would not be utilized, and therefore, this water system will be in compliance with the arsenic MCL.

The long-term solution is to connect the Northeast Highland Township water supply system with water storage. This will be the quickest and least expensive long-term solution. This would allow Huntwood Place to provide all of the water to the water system. During periods of high usage, water will be taken from storage to meet those peak demands.

#### **What must I do?**

Northeast Highland Township water supply system customers **MUST** restrict outdoor water use (lawn sprinkling, garden watering, car washing, etc.) during the high demand periods of 5 – 9 a.m. and 5 – 9 p.m. each day. Outdoor water use can be completed outside of these hours on an odd/even schedule. Individuals with odd-numbered addresses are restricted to outdoor watering only on odd-numbered days. Likewise, those having even-numbered addresses can water lawns, fill swimming pools, wash cars, etc. on even-numbered days. These mandatory restrictions will remain in place until further notice.

Please note that some water system customers utilize a private irrigation well for their sprinkling needs. These customers would not be required to follow these lawn sprinkling restrictions. Please contact the WRC at the number listed below if you have a private irrigation well.

#### **Whom can I contact with questions?**

Please call Connie Sims of the WRC at 248-858-1441 or Beth Corwin, P.E. of Highland Township at 248-887-3791 ext. 2 if you have any questions.