



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Governor Bentley Applauds State and Local Partnership to Identify a Temporary Resolution for the West Morgan-East Lawrence Water and Sewer Authority

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MONTGOMERY—Governor Bentley on Friday was briefed by the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) and the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) on a plan by West Morgan-East Lawrence Water and Sewer Authority (WMELWSA) that will help mitigate the water concerns created as a result of the WMELWSA announcement last week.

WMELWSA will purchase water from Decatur Utilities and blend it with WMELWSA drinking water in quantities anticipated to reduce the concentrations of perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) below those set forth in the final EPA health advisory issued in May. Sampling for PFOS and PFOA within impacted drinking water systems will continue until tests show concentrations are consistently below the final EPA health advisory levels.

“I applaud ADPH and ADEM for working with the West Morgan-East Lawrence Water and Sewer Authority (WMELWSA) and other local partners to help find a temporary solution to the water concerns,” Governor Bentley said. “Having safe drinking water is essential and I want everyone to feel confident in their water source as we jointly work toward a permanent solution.”

On May 19, 2016, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a final health advisory of 70 parts per trillion for perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) combined. This final health advisory, like the previous provisional health advisory, is not a regulatory standard and is not enforceable. As such, the advisory provides information about potential health risks to consumers served by the affected water systems to assist them in making an informed choice in considering an alternative source of drinking water.

The final health advisory level is for lifetime exposure to these substances rather than for acute exposure. The level was established at 70 parts per trillion in order to protect unborn and newborn babies which are still developing and are, therefore, more vulnerable to the potential health effects of PFOS and PFOA. This level also protects the general population from the potential health effects. Although it is not an enforceable, regulatory standard, the final health advisory notes that individuals served by the affected water systems, including those in the sensitive populations (i.e., pregnant women, nursing mothers and infants receiving formula prepared with the affected water), may consider using an alternative source of drinking water.

Based on available data, neither EPA, ADPH, or ADEM directed any water system in Alabama to issue a recommendation to its customers that would advise them to avoid drinking the water supplied by a system that may show a presence of PFOS or PFOA.

Two drinking water systems remain affected by the health advisory, which include the West Morgan-East Lawrence Water and Sewer Authority, as well as the West Lawrence Water Co-op.

Governor Bentley added, "Again, I appreciate the efforts of ADPH and ADEM for their diligence on this issue to help ensure the drinking water is safe in north Alabama and statewide."

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