

Lead Service Connections Program
City Council Meeting May 26, 2021

Comments by Steve Wolfson

I became aware of the unhealthy levels of lead in some Regina water when our residence was tested in 2017. I was particularly concerned because we are raising our twin granddaughters who were 6 years old at that time. We immediately began filtering our water and got in touch with the City of Regina about replacement of the City's lead service. There were, no lead pipes on our side. In 2019, the City replaced our lead service. This was greatly appreciated and relieved the concerns about the impact of lead on our children and us.

I remained concerned about the other people in Regina who were continuing to receive water with elevated levels of lead. I was pleased to learn that the City was taking this issue seriously and agreed to implement a 5 year program to replace all lead water services in Regina.

Now, I understand that the program is being amended to take 15 years to complete. This significantly increased time period is disappointing. I understand the cost and coordination aspects that make a 15 year program more appealing to the City. However, I do not feel that a 15 year program is in the best interest of the health of people receiving water with elevated lead levels, especially children. Over a period of 15 years, two additional generations of children will receive unhealthy levels of lead in their drinking water.

I would like the City Council to consider a shorter period of time for replacing all of the City's lead services and replacing the owner side lead services.

An effective stop gap water filter program is essential with a 5 year replacement program and much more so with a 15 year replacement program. I saw the stats showing that the uptake of residence water testing and requests for City supplied water filters is quite low. I also note the highest proportion of homes with lead service connections are in the Cathedral, Heritage, Old Lakeview, North Central and Al Ritchie neighborhoods. These areas are also home to many low income families. There are numerous reasons why low income families are less likely to be aware of and take advantage of the testing and filter programs.

For a 5, 10 or 15 year lead service replacement program the stop gap filter program is extremely important. I believe that City Council should implement, as soon as possible, an improved testing and home filter program that will assure that all residents with lead connections are fully aware of the testing and filter programs. I believe that the best way to achieve this is by going door to door with information and filters which can be installed at the time contact is made with the residents. Perhaps this could be a program staffed by university students over the summer.

In conclusion, I would like to thank City Council for taking seriously the dangers of lead in Regina's water. I am in favor of reducing the time to complete the program from the proposed 15 years.

Whichever time span City Council chooses I strongly urge City Council to create a program that will ensure that all residents, especially low income families, with lead service are supplied with an appropriate filter and filter replacements.

Thank you for your consideration.

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