

Alderman Tony Zielinski
City of Milwaukee Common Council
City Hall
200 E. Wells Street, #205
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Re: Milwaukee, Lead Pipes and Flushing

7/14/2017

To whom it may concern,

This letter is written as an addendum and correction to my July 11, 2017 communication.

It is important to note, that since our workshop on the lead in water issue last year in Milwaukee, the health department has followed through with several important programs that proactively reduce the health threat from lead in drinking water. While I (and others) can argue that these steps have not gone far enough, and point out language that has sometimes trivialized lead in water exposures relative to those posed by lead dust or lead paint—the new programs should have been explicitly acknowledged. My earlier letter should have made that clear. It did not do so.

Today, I discussed these programs members of your health department. Contrary to what was stated in my letter, they have been closely following recent peer reviewed research-- I will even be sending them some more scientific information which might help inform their future actions and policy. Moreover, they have acknowledged a need to continue improving their public health messaging as knowledge evolves, and a need to better connect with at risk populations.

In light of all the above, my prior statement that *“no one should rely on the Milwaukee Health Department to inform the local medical community of evidence based research on serious health risks that water lead exposures pose to at risk individuals (women of child bearing age)”* was both erroneous and unfortunate. Over the last 13 years I have testified to Congress 5 times, voluntarily provided written testimony and position letters to dozens of city councils and government agencies, and I have taken hundreds of public positions many of which were highly controversial at the time. In all those years I never once seriously regretted a public statement or a position that I have taken. But in this particular case, I do regret that statement and I herein retract it completely. I also apologize to the health department for this unfortunate choice of words and my failure to acknowledge the important steps they have taken.

Because an Environmental Protection Agency Lead and Copper Rule revision is already years late and a new rule is not expected until 2019, despite the 2014-2016 water crisis in Flint MI and a growing recognition of health threats from lead in water, communities such as Milwaukee must continue to navigate a shifting scientific and policy landscape with voluntary efforts and innovative programs. Steps taken to date by your health department, and proposals you are currently considering, represent important interim measures to protect the public, as we await more comprehensive programs and funding mechanisms to deal with the legacy of lead pipes and decades of misinformation about lead in water risks. I encourage you to continue working cooperatively with the health department and other community groups to improving these interim protections, while also working together to develop more comprehensive long term plans.

Please contact me at 540 320-8740 if you should have questions about this letter or this correction. I hope that it helps as you all continue working on this important problem.

Regards,



Marc Edwards
Cc: Council President Ashanti Hamilton
Alderman Robert Donovan