



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 8, MONTANA OFFICE
FEDERAL BUILDING, 10 W. 15th STREET, SUITE 3200
HELENA, MONTANA 59626

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EPA REGION VIII
HELENA MONTANA

Ref: 8MO

JUL 18 2014

CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

The Honorable Tracy King, President
Fort Belknap Indian Community Council
R.R.1, Box 66
Harlem, Montana 59526

Ms. Margaret Nicholson, Director
Prairie Mountain Utility
R.R. 1, Box 91
Fort Belknap Agency, Montana 59526

Re: Emergency Administrative Order, Boil Water Advisory, Lodgepole Housing Public Water Supply System, PWSID # 083090047, Docket No. SDWA-08-2014-0017

Dear President King and Ms. Nicholson:

On June 19, 2014, EPA issued an Emergency Administrative Order (EAO) to the Fort Belknap Indian Community (FBIC) and Prairie Mountain Utility (Utility) as owners/operators of the Lodgepole Housing Public Water System (System). As you may recall, the EAO was issued based on positive total coliform, fecal coliform and *E.coli* samples that were collected in the System. As part of the EAO, the FBIC and Utility are in the process of installing continuous disinfection at Lodgepole Housing, to be completed by August 1, 2014.

On July 17, 2014 the EPA was informed that recent total coliform test results for the System were positive and that the System had experienced loss of pressure due to the construction. The EPA is reinstating the requirement under the EAO that you issue a boil water advisory immediately to ensure that the people served by the water supply are provided with safe water. The boil water advisory shall remain in place until the EPA provides written notification to discontinue.


This boil order is critical because loss of pressure may cause a net movement of water from outside the pipe to the inside through cracks, breaks, or joints that are common in all water systems. Back siphonage also is a condition resulting from low or no pressure. Such system failures carry a high potential that fecal contamination or other disease causing organisms could enter the distribution system, posing a potential imminent and substantial endangerment to human health.


Total coliforms are bacteria that are naturally present in the environment and are used as an indicator that other, potentially-harmful, bacteria may be present. If samples test positive for total coliform, this is a warning of potential water quality problems. Total coliform include a group of bacteria known as fecal coliforms, which in turn include a subgroup of bacteria known as *E. coli* bacteria. Fecal coliforms and *E. coli* are types of coliform bacteria whose presence indicates possible contamination with human or animal wastes. Microbes in these wastes can cause short-term effects, such as diarrhea, cramps, nausea, and associated headaches and fatigue. They may pose a special health risk for infants, young children, some of the elderly, and people with severely compromised immune systems.

The FBIC and Utility must notify the public in the affected area of the situation described above, distribute a boil water advisory, and provide an alternate potable water supply, in accordance with paragraphs 12 and 13 of the EAO. Once corrective action has been completed and measures are taken to prevent intermittent or continuous pressure loss in the System's distribution system, the System shall flush and disinfect its distribution system and collect special purpose total coliform samples in accordance with paragraphs 14 through 21 of EAO.

The EPA appreciates the work performed by the System operators and Utility to address the current contamination and ensure the provisioning of safe drinking water to its users. Please do not hesitate to contact Julie A. DalSoglio at (406) 457-5025 if you have any questions concerning the EAO. If your staff has technical questions, they may contact Sienna Meredith (800) 457-2690, extension 5026, or (406) 457-5026. If the System is represented by an attorney who has questions, please ask the attorney to contact Amy Swanson, Enforcement Attorney, at (800) 227-8917, extension 6906, or at (303) 312-6906, or, in her absence, Peggy Livingston, Enforcement Attorney, at (800) 227-8917, extension 6858, or at (303) 312-6858.

Sincerely,


James H. Eppers, Supervisory Attorney
Legal Enforcement Program
Office of Enforcement, Compliance
and Environmental Justice


Julie A. DalSoglio, Director
EPA Region 8 Montana Office

Enclosure

cc: Ina Nez Perce, Fort Belknap Environmental Director, email
Scott Snow, FBIC Head Operator
Sherry Bishop, FBIC Compliance Officer
Catharine Aragon, FBIC Tribal Attorney
Tina Artemis, EPA 8 Regional Hearing Clerk