



City of Cambridge

32

IN CITY COUNCIL

Councillor Walsh

February 5, 1990

Copy
WHEREAS: The content of the Public Notification, NOTICE TO ALL WATER USERS, issued in January 1990 by the Superintendent of the Cambridge Water Department (copy attached) and, as published in the media, brings into serious question the quality of administration at the Water Department. Failure to comply on time with the referenced requirements of the Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulations for over one and one half years, when testing of water samples indicated the presence of contaminants in excess of the maximum level permissible for certain contaminants, is without justification. That, coupled with an obvious continuing increase in the contaminant level during the October-December 1989 period and the absence of straight answers about a definitive solution to the problem within a definite time framework, is not acceptable. The Department claims to be "taking steps" to ensure compliance with the regulatory requirements. At their largest, those steps appear to be very small not only in terms of the referenced compliance but also in decreasing the level of contaminants which require formal notification of the public in the first place. Now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That this Council expresses no confidence in the administrative efficiency of the Superintendent of the Water Department so far as the matter at hand is concerned. The absence of a visible and tangible sense of urgency, the present pace of indeterminate delay and the repetitive putting off of precise answers to this Council and to the citizens of Cambridge whom we represent on the matters at hand constitute an unacceptable posture. And be it further

ORDERED: That the City Manager present in hand a duly engrossed copy of this Resolution to the Superintendent of the Cambridge Water Department, John J. Cusack, Jr. as soon as possible.

(ATTACHMENT)

✓/✓



City of Cambridge

32.

IN CITY COUNCIL

February 5, 1990

COUNCILLOR WALSH
COUNCILLOR CYR
VICE-MAYOR REEVES

WHEREAS: The content of the Public Notification, NOTICE TO ALL WATER USERS, issued in January 1990 by the Superintendent of the Cambridge Water Department, a copy of which is attached, and, as published in the media, brings into serious question the quality of administration at the Water Department. Failure to comply on time with the referenced requirements of the Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulations for over one and one half years, when testing of water samples indicated the presence of contaminants in excess of the maximum level permissible for certain contaminants, is without justification. That, coupled with an obvious continuing increase in the contaminant level during the October-December 1989 period and the absence of straight answers about a definitive solution to the problem within a definite time framework, is not acceptable. The Department claims to be "taking steps" to ensure compliance with the regulatory requirements. At their largest, those steps appear to be very small not only in terms of the referenced compliance but also in decreasing the level of contaminants which require formal notification of the public in the first place; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That this City Council expresses no confidence in the administrative efficiency of the Superintendent of the Water Department so far as the matter at hand is concerned. The absence of a visible and tangible sense of urgency, the present pace of indeterminate delay and the repetitive putting off of precise answers to this City Council and to the citizens of Cambridge whom we represent on the matters at hand constitute an unacceptable posture; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Manager present in hand a duly engrossed copy of this resolution to the Superintendent of the Cambridge Water Department, John J. Cusack, Jr. as soon as possible.

In City Council February 5, 1990.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

Joseph E. Connarton
City Clerk



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

250 FRESH POND PKY., CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138 • TEL. 498-9070

OFFICE OF THE WATER BOARD

Donald F. Hornig
President

Thomas J. Begley

Ruth C. Birkhoff

Walter N. Conlon

A. Paul Flynn

January 1990

Public Notification

NOTICE TO ALL WATER USERS

The City of Cambridge has been ordered by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to notify the public that it is in non-compliance with the following requirements of the Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulations: (1) 310 CMR 22.16(A) and (B); (2) 310 CMR 22.22(9) (d); and 310 CMR 22.22(10) (b) 10.

310 CMR 22.16(A) and (B). The Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulations require Cambridge to routinely test samples of its water for regulated contaminants, including total trihalomethanes (THM's). Cambridge is required to notify the public in accordance with 310 CMR 22.16(A) and (B) if the analytic results of those tests indicate the water exceeds the maximum level permissible for certain contaminants.

The maximum level permissible in drinking water for total THM's, as established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and DEP, is 100 Parts per billion (ppb). The results of tests on Cambridge's drinking water indicate Cambridge exceeded the maximum contaminant level in each of the following quarters:

a)	July - September 1988	112ppb
b)	October - December 1988	107ppb
c)	January - March 1989	113ppb
d)	April - June 1989	125ppb
e)	July - September 1989	130ppb
f)	October - December 1989	196ppb

For violations (a) (b) (c) above, Cambridge is required by 310 CMR 22.16(A) to have notified the public by direct mail within three months of each exceedance, by publication in a newspaper of general circulation on three successive days within fourteen days of each exceedance and by furnishing a copy of the notice to the principal radio and television stations serving the area. Cambridge failed to notify the public of the foregoing exceedances of the maximum contaminant level for THM's as required by 310 CMR 22.16(A).

For violations (d) (e) above, Cambridge is required by 310 CMR 22.16(B) to have notified the public by direct mail or by hand delivery within (30) thirty days of each exceedance and by publication in a newspaper of general circulation within fourteen days of each exceedance. Cambridge failed to notify the public of the foregoing exceedances of the maximum contaminant level for THM's as required by 310 CMR 22.16(B).

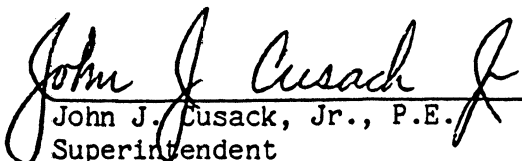
THM's, including chloroform, bromoform, bromodichlormethane and dibromochloromethane, are formed as by-products of chlorination, which is used in the disinfection process at the Cambridge Fresh Pond Water Treatment Plant. The effects of THM's on the human body are presently under study. Tests have shown that high doses of chloroform can be carcinogenic to rats and mice. As a result of these tests, the United States Environmental Protection Agency considers chloroform a potential human carcinogen and believes that other THM's are implicated as potential carcinogens by association.

Cambridge currently operates an uncovered distribution storage Reservoir at Payson Park in the Town of Belmont. In order to maintain an adequate level of chlorine at Payson Park it is necessary to use an amount of chlorine at the Fresh Pond Water Treatment Plant in excess of what might usually be required for disinfection purposes. Cambridge recently awarded a multi-million dollar contract for construction of a complete enclosure for that site. Completion of that project should result in a reduction in chlorine use, and lower THM levels.

310 CMR 22.22(9)(d). DEP requires the owner of each commercial, industrial and institutional premises to install a backflow prevention device on all cross connections between the public water system distribution lines and other systems or substances of questionable or unknown quality. Cambridge is required by 310 CMR 22.22 (9) (d) to test semi-annually each backflow prevention device installed within its service area to ensure that it functions properly. Each cross connection not protected by a functioning backflow prevention device represents a direct conduit for contaminants to enter and jeopardize the public water supply. Cambridge failed to perform the required semi-annual tests of these devices during 1988 and 1989, in non-compliance with 310 CMR 22.22(9) (d). Cambridge intends to advertise a Request for Proposals to retain a private company to perform these tests on its behalf.

310 CMR 22.22 (10) (b)10. The Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulations require each public water system to submit a Cross Connection Control Program Plan that details each water supplier's plans for preventing contamination of the public water system by unprotected cross connections. Cambridge was required to have submitted its plan to DEP by June 1, 1988, but failed to do so. Cambridge submitted its Cross Connection Proteam Plan to DEP on November 13, 1989 for final approval.

Cambridge regrets these errors in meeting the foregoing regulatory requirements and is taking steps to ensure that non-compliance is avoided in the future.


John J. Cusack, Jr., P.E.
Superintendent
CAMBRIDGE WATER DEPARTMENT

Order # 32

F-54

Councillors Walsh and Cyr and Vice-Mayor
Reeves re: no confidence in the administrative
efficiency in the Water Department.

In City Council,

February 5, 1990

ORDER ADOPTED BY 9 MEMBERS.