

CHLORAMINE HEARING

June 17, 2010

My name is Sue Daugherty. I live in Fairview Township, York County, Pennsylvania and I am an Environmental Educator having served for many years numerous non-profit organizations, among them are: the Pennsylvania Forestry Association, the Pennsylvania Resources Council, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, The Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania and The National Garden Club. I also served on the Task Force to create the Pennsylvania Environmental Education Master Plan.

Today you will be provided with information on monochloramines from many people and perspectives, experts in water, chemistry and health. I thank you for the opportunity to share some thoughts regarding chemicals, the environmental impact of chloramines and family health and finance.

From the Pennsylvania Environmental Bill of Rights, The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Article I, Section 27.

“The people have a right to clean air, pure water and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment.” This is a right of every citizen. A trust is given to the Commonwealth to provide these qualities of life as stewards for this and future generations.

With this switch from chlorine to monochloramine as a water disinfectant we are now faced with adding even more and stronger chemicals into our environment and bodies.

There is a reason that our Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Building is named the Rachel Carson Building. A native of the state, Rachel Carson was and still is recognized worldwide for exposing the impact of chemicals in the natural world. Her book, “Silent Spring”, published in 1961 is still valued by educators across the nation as one of the best books ever written on the environment.

Speaking on all chemicals, Rachel Carson, “I contend that we have allowed these chemicals to be used with little or no advance investigation of their effect on our soil, water, wildlife and man himself. Future generations are unlikely to condone our lack of prudent concern for the integrity of the natural world that supports all life.

This is also an era dominated by industry, in which the right to make a dollar at whatever cost is seldom challenged. When the public protests, confronted with some obvious evidence of damaging results, it is fed little tranquilizing pills of half truths. We receive false assurances, to sugar coat impalatable facts.”

This wonderful earth is bound together by myriad interdependent life forms. Each is precious and contributes to the lives of humans and each other. This is the miracle of the web of life. “The earth is not more complex than we think it is more complex than we can ever think.” A. Einstein

The second most valued book on the environment was written by Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac. He writes, "A thing is right when it tends to promote the integrity and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

The environment is like a three legged stool, very delicately balanced, and with all of these relatively untested chemicals added to our environment, we are cutting off the legs of the stool. It becomes unbalanced and dysfunctional.

Monochloramine, a mixture of chlorine and ammonia, is noted to be persistent and it kills living animals such as fish, frogs, turtles, invertebrates, salmonids, earthworms and spiders. Earthworms and spiders are a gardeners best friends. Our wonderful song birds need invertebrates to live. We know that monochloramine harms so many forms of life, do we really think that it will be safe for us and our families?

When using ammonia water in our homes and yard for wildlife and plants, will we be assaulting the living animals which are a necessary part of a functioning ecosystem? And what about the family pets? Will they end up with concentrations of ammonia in their systems?

Exposures to ammonia water will also happen for living animals with runoff from hydrant flushing, firefighting, car washing and simple home, business and out of door usage. EPA estimates that 40,000 occurrences of untreated wastewater went into our streams in 2009.

Customer notification - the water utility only notified customers of two issues ,that chloramines would kill fish and could not be used in dialysis.

To my knowledge it was never disclosed by the utility that:

It should not be used in mixing baby formula, it could cause blue baby syndrome.

No tests of the effects of chloramines have been done on humans.

It is a known skin and respiratory irritant.

It produces genotoxic and carcinogenic toxics more powerful than chlorine.

It is a danger to the natural world.

On August 20, 2009 of the approximately 35 persons testifying in Camp Hill before the PUC, no one wanted the introduction of chloramines. When people understand what it is, they don't want it! The voters don't want it! And yet it is forced upon them. It has yet to be fully explained to most customers.

The Family Budget – In this uneasy time of belt tightening on the home front, how are we to respond?

Besides the costs in health, doctor and veterinary bills, what are we to do?

What are we to do?

Install and maintain a whole house partially successful water filtration system?

Who pays?

Replacements of plumbing hoses and washers?

Who pays?

Water delivery service?

Who pays?

Sell your home and leave your neighbors?

Who pays?

Upgrade the sewage treatment plant due to an increased burden by chloramines?

Who pays?

Capture rain water for plants and fish tanks?

Who pays?

Conduct regular tests for leaching pipes?

Who pays?

Measure the synergistic effects of chloramines with currently prescribed medications?

Who pays?

It looks like the individual hard working citizens of the State of Pennsylvania PAY!
And pay again. We are paying for a water utility service. We do not know what will come out of our faucets. It might look like water, it might taste like water, but it will not be water as we know it. Never again will we be able to fill our pets bowl, give our grandchild a drink, fill the birdbath or water our flowers without wondering if we are poisoning them with ammonia water.

There are alternatives to chloramine. We are all in this together. Let's work to find the solution.

Stop initiating the use of chloramine until further testing.

Look at the new evidence and safer alternatives.

Listen to the wisdom of the past. Become visionary instead of a reactionary. We are faced with a quiet clear "oil" spill sanctioned by EPA and DER due to insufficient information and administered with a 'trust me' attitude.

One earth, one chance, one life. Are we blindly rushing down a one way street with a short term fix and long term environmental degradation, are we hoping that when disaster comes a magical EMS team will appear to save us?

Let's strive for a better solution.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sue Daugherty, Environmental Conservation
131 Old Ford Drive
Camp Hill, PA 17011
717-920-9600