

Testimony of  
Cosmo Servidio, Regional Director  
Department of Environmental Protection, Southeast Regional Office  
Before the House Consumer Affairs Committee  
July 8, 2014

Good morning Chairman Godshall and members of the Consumer Affairs committee.

I am Cosmo Servidio and I am the Regional Director of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Southeast Regional Office (SERO) in Norristown.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to testify on the boil water advisory and low pressure issues experienced by some Pennsylvania American Water (PA American) customers from May 20-24, 2014. My comments will focus on DEP's policies and regulations in regard to water suppliers during these incidents.

The Pennsylvania Safe Drinking Water regulations require that public water suppliers shall take whatever investigative or corrective action is necessary to assure that safe and potable water is continuously supplied to the users.

When there are circumstances which may adversely affect the quality or quantity of positive water pressure in any portion of the distribution system, there is evidence of contamination, or a water supplier suspects a high risk of contamination, a public water supplier is required to report the circumstances to the Department within one hour of that discovery.

In the case of one of these events, DEP has a policy in place to require the public water supplier to provide public notice as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours after the water supplier learns of the situation. The policy provides procedures to ensure water supplies are safe for potable use during a loss of positive pressure situation and after pressure is restored.

The notice requires a Boil Water Advisory (BWA). A BWA is a public notice that directs consumers to boil their water or use an alternate source of drinking water. Boiling water is recommended to inactivate or destroy pathogens that may be in contaminated water.

In order to lift a BWA, public water suppliers must accomplish the following: 1) complete the necessary corrective actions, 2) flush lines or storage tanks, and 3) obtain satisfactory lab results on two consecutive days.

From the morning of Tuesday, May 20 through Friday, May 23, DEP staff from the DEP SERO was in frequent contact with PA American monitoring the response to the treatment upset at the Norristown treatment plant.

On Friday, May 23, DEP received sample results from PA American. The results that DEP received shortly before noon on Friday, May 23 were for samples that were taken on Wednesday, May 21 and Thursday, May 22. The sample results indicated the absence of bacteria in the finished water and in the distribution system.

From DEP's perspective, PA American followed DEP's policies and regulations during this incident.

I again thank the committee for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony and I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have. Thank you.