



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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Larry Hogan
Governor

Ben Grumbles
Secretary

Boyd Rutherford
Lieutenant Governor

January 21, 2016

The Honorable Christopher Cerino
Mayor, Town of Chestertown
118 N. Cross Street
Chestertown, MD 21620

Dear Mayor Cerino:

Thank you and Town of Chestertown (“the Town”) officials Bill Ingersoll and Bob Sipes for meeting with me and my staff at the Maryland Department of the Environment (“the Department”) this past November to discuss the ongoing petroleum cleanup at the University of Maryland Shore Medical Center at Chestertown (“the Hospital”). This meeting was an opportunity for us to share our views and express our common interest related to the remediation project at the Hospital.

As we discussed at our meeting, the Department has begun drafting an administrative consent order which will legally identify the Department’s goals for the remediation of the release and the Hospital’s responsibilities, currently and in the future. We expect to execute this agreement with the Hospital early in the spring of 2016.

The Town has concerns regarding the potential for future contamination of its public drinking water supply wells from the historic release and desires certainty regarding protection of the Town’s water supply should it become contaminated with petroleum from the Hospital release. Pursuant to its authority on behalf of the public at large in seeking to protect public health and safety and the natural resources of the State, the Department investigates groundwater issues, oversees remedial work, and monitors groundwater in the Chestertown area for concerns arising from various pollution sources, including but not limited to the Hospital’s heating oil release. The Department is not acting for the specific benefit of any particular group, person, or property. Neither the State of Maryland nor the Department insures or guarantees the integrity of the water from drinking water supply wells, including any that may provide service to the Town. By State law, it is the Town’s responsibility to provide potable water to its citizens it serves. The Department’s statutory and regulatory functions related to the Hospital’s oil release and other groundwater pollution in the Town do not affect, and are not intended to influence, the Town’s right to investigate and evaluate its sources for water supply.

As you may know, the Town’s drinking water supply, both raw and finished water, has been contaminated with certain volatile organic compounds, including perchloroethylene (PCE) and methyl tertiary-butyl ether (MtBE). Although the Town’s water supply has been treated and the levels of these



contaminants have been determined to be safe, according to federal and State drinking water standards, the Department has concerns about these contaminants. Neither PCE nor MtBE has been determined to be related to the petroleum release at the Hospital and, to our knowledge, the source(s) of these contaminants has not been definitively determined at this time. Under the State's Superfund Program, the Department will be investigating historic dry cleaning chemical and petroleum uses in the Town to determine if any sources can be identified and remediated.

During our meeting, there was discussion of replacement wells if the current ones were to be impacted by the Hospital release. As another option for the Town to explore, you may consider working with the Department's Maryland Water Quality Financing Administration (MWQFA) for assistance in planning for replacing any of the Town's drinking water supply wells. The MWQFA recently announced funding opportunities for Federal Fiscal Year 2016 / State Fiscal Year 2018. Funding is available in the form of loans, loan principal forgiveness (where applicable), and grants (where applicable) for many capital infrastructure projects, including drinking water source, treatment, storage, and distribution projects. A wide variety of point source and nonpoint source pollution prevention projects can now be funded with Bay Restoration Fund grants. Application forms, additional details, and other useful documents are posted on MWQFA's webpage at:

http://www.mde.maryland.gov/programs/Water/QualityFinancing/Pages/Programs/WaterPrograms/water_quality_finance/index.aspx for details. Please contact Ms. Elaine Dietz at (410) 537-3908 or at elaine.dietz@maryland.gov, if you need further information about these programs.

Thank you again for meeting with me and staff regarding the Hospital cleanup. The Department shares your concerns regarding the protection of public health and the environment in Chestertown and looks forward to continuing to work with Town officials to ensure the Town's residents are informed of the activities related to the Hospital cleanup and the investigation into the presence of PCE and MtBE in the Town's water supply. We will continue to provide documents related to the cleanup on the Department's Oil Control Program Remediation Sites webpage at:

http://mde.maryland.gov/programs/land/oilcontrol/remediationsites/pages/programs/landprograms/oil_control/remediationsites/index.aspx and will provide regular updates to Town officials. If you have any questions, please contact me or Hilary Miller, Director, Land Management Administration, at (410) 537-3304 or at hilary.miller@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,



Ben Grumbles
Secretary

cc: Council Members, Town of Chestertown
Mr. Bill Ingersoll, Town Manager, Town of Chestertown
Mr. Bob Sipes, Utilities Manager, Town of Chestertown
Mr. Horacio Tablada, Deputy Secretary for Regulatory Programs and Policy, MDE
Ms. Hilary Miller, Director, MDE Land Management Administration
Ms. Lynn Buhl, Director, MDE Water Management Administration

