Message

From: Jones, Enesta [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=65B8E6C6E5CA4A7A9AE85D98A4C8EEDB-EJONES02]
Sent: 6/8/2018 6:53:28 PM
To: Sarah Craig [Ex. 6]
CC: Press [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b293283291dc44e0b5d1c36be9281d8a-Press]
Subject: Re: Inquiry into EPA's assessment of Arsenic Health Risks

Sarah,

On background:

Q1. What is the scale of the problem of having arsenic in drinking water systems in the US? Do you know how many and the locations of community water systems that are out of compliance? What state in the US is the worse off in terms of arsenic levels in drinking water? What area/town in the US is the worse off in terms of arsenic levels in drinking water?

A1. For EPA's data that includes information on arsenic, visit: https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/safe-drinking-water-information-system-sdwis-federal-reporting

Q2. When did the EPA pass legislation the regulates the amount of arsenic in drinking water at 50 ppb? What was the legislation called? --When did the EPA change this to 10 ppb? Why did they decide to change this? --What happened after the EPA passed this law? How did they order states to come into compliance?

A2. In 1942, the U.S. Public Health Service first established an arsenic drinking water standard for interstate water carriers at 0.05 mg arsenic per liter (50 ppb). The Safe Drinking Water Act passed by Congress in 1974 amended the Public Health Service Act and specified that EPA set drinking water standards. On December 24, 1975, EPA issued a National Interim Primary Drinking Water Regulation for arsenic of 50 ppb. Congress amended the Safe Drinking Water Act in 1996, and included requirements for EPA to issue a revised drinking water standard for Arsenic. In 2001, EPA adopted a lower standard for of 10 ppb for arsenic in drinking water. This protects consumers from the effects of long-term, chronic exposure to arsenic. PWSs had to comply with the lower standard by January 23, 2006.

Q3. I'm aware that in 2010 the EPA conducted an assessment to revise the health risks of drinking water with arsenic in it. Could you send me the 2010 assessment from the EPA? I can't locate it online but this report mentions it. What is the revised risk of getting cancer from drinking water with arsenic in it at levels of 10ppb? (The report I linked says it's 1 in 136, more than 17 times higher than current assumptions.) How did you determine this revised risk?

A3. The archived 2010 draft assessment (cancer) can be found on the arsenic webpage here: https://cfpub.epa.gov/ncea/iris_drafts/recordisplay.cfm?deid=219111

In our 2010 draft assessment, the lifetime incidence risk is 7.3E-03, which is the same as the 1 in 136 figure that is in the Environmental Integrity Project report. The lifetime incidence risk at 10ppb in drinking water is based on female cancer mortality data (bladder and lung cancers) from studies conducted in Taiwan. The methodology for determining cancer risk in the 2010 draft assessment is described in section 5.3.7, and the results are presented in section 5.3.8.

Q4. Is the EPA doing anything about these revised risks? Are they working to lower the legal limit? If so, how? If not, why not? Has the EPA directed this assessment to each state? If so, what is California doing about it? How does the process of revising the level work?

A4. The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) requires EPA to review each national primary drinking water regulation at least once every six years and revise them, if appropriate. As part of the "Six-Year Review," EPA evaluates any newly available data, information and technologies to determine if any regulatory revisions are needed. Revisions must maintain or strengthen public health protection. For more information: https://www.epa.gov/dwsixyearreview

EPA did not identify the NPDWR for arsenic as a candidate for revision.

EPA is currently developing an updated IRIS assessment of inorganic arsenic. Information, including materials, milestones, and relevant public documents for this assessment may be accessed on the IRIS arsenic webpage here. As new materials and public documents become available these will be posted on the IRIS arsenic webpage.

Q5. Has there been any documented cases of communities exposed to arsenic over a long period of time and having clusters of cancer?

A5. Please reach out to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Q6. When did Congress approved $1.5 billion to California over a decade to upgrade its water systems through a program called the Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Fund? When did they approve this fund for the rest of the US? And how much were these funds?

A6. For information on EPA's Drinking Water SRF as well as the allocations provided to each state: https://www.epa.gov/drinkingwatersrf

What personal sized water filtration systems are on the market and work to remove arsenic from water?

There are a number of point of entry (whole home) and point of use treatment devices available on the market to remove arsenic from water. Water chemistry is important to know when deciding which option is best.

Does water with arsenic in it taste sweet?

No, certainly not at levels naturally in water.

On Jun 6, 2018, at 6:53 PM, Sarah Craig <Ex. 6> wrote:

Thank you Enesta! This background is helpful.

I looked through those websites you sent and they don't mention the 2010 EPA assessment. Could you explain what happened in 2010 - and do you have this assessment you could send me?

I think the best way to answer my remaining questions is to speak to an expert at the EPA. Who would be best to speak with and could you help me arrange this?

And in the meantime, would you be able to help answer my remaining questions I spelled out?

Thanks again for your help, it's much appreciated.

Best
Sarah

On Wed, Jun 6, 2018 at 3:01 PM, Jones, Enesta <Jones.Enesta@epa.gov> wrote:

Sarah,

On background: The Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) is the maximum level of a contaminant in drinking water at which no known or anticipated adverse effect on the health of persons would occur, and which allows an adequate margin of safety. MCLGs are not enforceable. For known cancer-causing contaminants the MCLG is set at zero because any chemical exposure could present a cancer risk.

In the 1996 amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), Congress directed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to propose a new arsenic regulation. Prior to 2001, the MCL for arsenic was 50 µg/L (or 50 ppb). In January 2001, EPA revised the MCL to 10 µg/L (10 ppb). EPA believes that the current MCL maximizes health risk reduction at a cost justified by the benefits. For more information: https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/chemical-contaminant-rules

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On Jun 5, 2018, at 10:56 PM, Sarah Craig **Ex. 6** wrote:

Dear Press at the EPA,

My name is Sarah Craig and I'm a journalist based in Oakland, CA. I'm working on a radio documentary about arsenic in the drinking water of Alpaugh and Allensworth in Tulare County in California's Central Valley. The story will air on KALW Public Radio in San Francisco, CA.

I have a few questions for the EPA about how they set health risks for arsenic and how they revised these risks back in 2010. I'm also interested in learning about what the EPA is doing about the revised 2010 risks and if they are working to lower the legal limit.

Could you connect me with the best person to speak with about this? My number is **Ex. 6**

Thank you!
Best
Sarah Craig

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Ex. 6
www.sarahcraigmedia.com

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