

July 18, 2006

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Dr. Hans Peterson, Ph.D.
Voluntary Executive Director
Safe Drinking Water Foundation
912 Idylwyld Drive North
SASKATOON SK S7L 0Z6

Dear Dr. Peterson:

Thank you for your letter of June 22, 2006, and the accompanying articles concerning the water quality problems in rural Saskatchewan and elsewhere. We all share your interest in the drinking water quality issues that you raise.

Saskatchewan has made excellent progress under the Safe Drinking Water Strategy to enhance and protect the drinking water supplies for all communities in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan Environment has adopted drinking water quality standards as part of *The Water Regulations, 2002* and the Department also administers numerous other policies and guidelines. These initiatives have focused Saskatchewan residents on the issues of drinking water quality and source water protection.

The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority has been charged with protecting and improving the source water in Saskatchewan. They have made great strides forward in conjunction with local planning committees in promoting awareness of the importance of rivers and lakes to the health and well being of the province.

SaskWater's role under the strategy is to provide safe and cost effective water and wastewater treatment solutions to communities and industry in Saskatchewan. SaskWater has moved quickly to provide leadership in developing innovative and sustainable solutions. Our partnership with the Consulting Engineers of Saskatchewan has resulted in collaboration in many areas including technology seminars where SaskWater and Saskatchewan's consulting engineering firms share experiences, look at industry best practices and review leading edge technologies for application in Saskatchewan.

... 2

SaskWater's partnership with the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association has been successful in providing a cost effective way for small communities to undertake their required Water System Assessments. The assessments have focused the communities on the state of their water system and given them an understanding of what it takes to have safe and reliable water treatment and distribution infrastructure.

SaskWater's new line of business to provide Certified Operation and Maintenance of community owned water and wastewater treatment infrastructure has provided communities with the security of well trained operation staff backed up by a strong process and infrastructure maintenance engineering group. SaskWater's 24/7 remote monitoring system and best practices in routine maintenance of treatment, distribution and collection systems brings added risk protection.

SaskWater has adopted new drinking water quality governing standards for our systems. The standard combines the best of Saskatchewan's drinking water standards and the US Environmental Protection Agency primary drinking water standards into a governing standard covering bacteriological, turbidity, chemical, pesticide and radiological parameters. Drinking water standards in Saskatchewan and the rest of the world will be more stringent in the future. It makes economic sense for SaskWater to bring our systems into compliance early.

SaskWater owns a number of regional distribution systems to bring quality drinking water from larger communities to small surrounding communities and rural areas. For many areas of Saskatchewan this type of system is the best and most cost effective solution. Regional systems are working effectively in many Canadian provinces and many more are being planned and constructed. In 2002 researchers from the University of Saskatchewan undertook extensive studies of water quality in long pipeline distribution systems. SaskWater collaborated in this research project and has used the knowledge gained to design water quality monitoring programs and maintenance protocols for our regional systems.

SaskWater is currently piloting a number of technologies including aeration pretreatment, advance membrane filtration and biological filtration systems as we look to upgrade our own and community water treatment infrastructure to meet the new standards set by Saskatchewan Environment. Saskatchewan companies and engineering consultants are spearheading the development of these technologies for application in the Saskatchewan market.

SaskWater is working with the Communities of Tomorrow Inc. as they bring scientists from the National Research Council and the Universities of Saskatchewan and Regina together with major utility owners to look at projects covering all aspects of water and wastewater treatment. Many of the research topics are focused on the challenges facing rural Saskatchewan. We are confident that these research projects will be successful in improving drinking water quality, reducing costs

Dr. Hans Peterson

July 18, 2006

Page 3

and improving the sustainability of the infrastructure. One of the key projects in this initiative is looking at the development of relatively simple, innovative and self-sustaining water treatment systems that require minimum maintenance that could be utilized by First Nations and small rural communities in Saskatchewan.

SaskWater is currently working with research scientists from the Universities of Saskatchewan, Toronto, McMaster and Brock on a Canadian Water Network funded research project which is using SaskWater infrastructure to study energy optimization, effects of transients on water quality in regional transmission pipelines and three other key research areas which will help SaskWater and other municipalities and utility owners in Canada improve their systems in the future.

Thank you again for your letter and your thoughts on providing safe drinking water for the people of Saskatchewan. I look forward to seeing more of your contributions to industry publications in the future.

Sincerely,



David Forbes
Minister Responsible for SaskWater

cc: Honourable Eric Cline, Minister of Industry and Resources
Honourable John Nilson, Minister of Environment
Honourable Len Taylor, Minister of Health
Honourable Frank Quennel, Minister of Justice
Stuart Kramer, President, SaskWater
Bob Wheatley, Vice President, Engineering, SaskWater