



CITY OF ATWATER TAKES A PROACTIVE STANCE ON A NEWLY REGULATED COMPOUND 1,2,3-TRICHLOROPROPANE

The City of Atwater's Interim City Manager, Art de Werk, recently outlined steps taken by the City to deal with a newly regulated compound called 1,2,3-Trichloropropane (TCP). The State adopted a Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for TCP in drinking water of 5 parts per trillion (ppt) effective in January 2018.

TCP is exclusively a man-made chemical. The primary source of TCP in groundwater is past agricultural use of soil fumigants (Shell D-D and Dow Telone) that contain TCP as an impurity. Farmers around Atwater used soil fumigants containing TCP from at least the 1950's until 1990. Farmers were not told that D-D or Telone could contaminate groundwater. The City has been testing for TCP since 1989. The detection limits for testing TCP were recently lowered, making it possible to detect TCP in drinking water at very low levels, that is parts per trillion ("ppt"). Before 2001, the lowest level of TCP that could be reliably measured was 500 ppt.

Based on 2015 data, the State Division of Drinking Water has estimated that 103 water systems serving approximately 920,000 Californians have detected 1,2,3-TCP above 5 ppt in at least one drinking water source. Communities in several counties within the Central Valley are particularly impacted due to their reliance on groundwater and past use of pesticides containing 1,2,3-TCP in many agricultural areas.

The City of Atwater has previously disclosed in the annual Consumer Confidence Reports that TCP is present in our drinking water. Until the Maximum Contaminant Level was adopted, however, the City of Atwater did not have guidance from the State on what amount of TCP should not be present in drinking water. The City has taken the following steps to respond to the new regulations:

1. The City has retained an expert to evaluate what type of treatment can be used to effectively remove TCP from our drinking water supply. That expert has provided detailed recommendations concerning what needs to be done. Unfortunately, TCP is present in many City wells and the cost of dealing with the problem is in the tens of millions of dollars;
2. We have converted a treatment system that was used to remove DBCP in the past to remove TCP today. This filter effectively removes all TCP from Well No. 15. We also currently use Well No. 21, which currently has no TCP contamination.
3. We cannot supply all the City's needs for water using Well Nos. 15 and 21 alone. TCP has been detected in nine (9) of the City's ten (10) wells. Until additional treatment facilities are installed, the City cannot supply water that is completely free of TCP. The 5ppt

standard for TCP is intended to assure that if you drink water containing TCP for a lifetime (70 years), there will only be one additional cancer case in a population of one million.

4. The City filed a lawsuit years ago to require the manufacturers of products containing TCP (Dow and Shell) to reimburse the City for the costs of dealing with TCP. To date, the manufacturers have not provided Atwater with any financial help to deal with the problem they created. If we are unable to resolve the case, we expect to proceed to trial in Merced Superior Court this year to obtain the funds needed to treat the remaining contaminated wells.

The City routinely monitors its wells to make sure that the water supplied by the City to its residents complies with all State water quality standards. In April, we expect the State will require the City of Atwater to provide you with a written notice that TCP in some City wells exceeds State safe drinking water standards for TCP.

Because the Maximum Contaminant Level was adopted only three months ago, the City of Atwater cannot install treatment on all TCP contaminated wells before April, 2018. We are doing everything we reasonably can to bring the City into full compliance with State water quality standards. We also made a decision to provide this notice to you now instead of waiting until the State required us to provide you with a formal written notice. If you have additional questions about TCP and your health, you should visit the State Department of Drinking Water's TCP webpage (http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/certlic/drinkingwater/123TCP.shtml).

For questions regarding this notice please call the City of Atwater's Interim City Manager Art de Werk at 209-357-6300; or Duane C. Miller, an attorney retained for this matter since October 2005, at 916-488-6688.