

Harbage, Rebecca

From: Martin, Denise
Sent: Thursday, April 16, 2020 3:04 PM
To: Mavencamp, Terri; Chambers, Jenny
Subject: FW: Covid19 work delay: MDT Plains

From: Alvey, Laura
Sent: Thursday, April 16, 2020 2:56 PM
To: Martin, Denise <demartin@mt.gov>
Subject: Covid19 work delay: MDT Plains

Denise-

On March 25, 2020, I called Brian Goodman of MDT to discuss water sampling at the MDT Plains site in light of the Covid19 pandemic and measures being taken to control the spread of the disease. The following is a summary of the analysis and factors that went into the determination to postpone or skip the MDT Plains first quarter 2020 sampling event:

- The sampling event would necessitate MDT's consultant traveling from Bozeman to Plains, and would require an overnight stay.
- Some of the sampling requires entry into homes and businesses, and some of the residents in Plains are older folks. Potential spread of the Covid19 virus in Plains due to water sampling poses an immediate health risk to residents and to MDT's consultant. There are no or minimal human health risks posed cancelling one round of quarterly sampling at the site.
- MDT conducts quarterly (4 times per year) groundwater sampling at approximately 20 homes and businesses in Plains. The sampling is conducted to track the salt plume, and ensure that treatment systems are removing arsenic from deep water supplies at 3 residences and 1 business. All 4 of the locations with arsenic treatments systems are supplied with bottled water for drinking and cooking.
- Risks to human health at the MDT Plains site are low:
 - Salts (sodium, chloride, and associated parameters) in the shallow aquifer are being addressed primarily due to beneficial use issues experienced by residents (bad tasting water, plumbing and fixture corrosion, landscaping problems).
 - MDT is providing bottled water to all residents and businesses where MDT salts have caused well water to exceed one or more screening levels. The bottled water service continues, and no Plains resident should need to drink contaminated water.
 - There are six 6 locations where MDT installed deep replacement wells for residents/businesses. The deep well water contains unacceptable levels of naturally occurring arsenic. MDT installed treatment systems to remove arsenic from the water. At all these locations, MDT continues to provide bottled water service. Therefore, even if one of the arsenic treatment systems were to be functioning inadequately, exposure to the arsenic would be minimal (through bathing and showering only) and for a short duration. Thus far, the arsenic treatment systems have functioned as expected. Also, at time, only three of the original six arsenic treatment systems are in use. Two residents were reconnected to their shallow water wells, and one residence is vacant.
 - MDT installed covered storage at its Plains maintenance facility to prevent additional salts from leaching to groundwater. In general, groundwater sampling over the last two years has shown stable or decreasing salt concentrations across the site. It is unlikely that skipping one round of samples in Spring 2020 will result in significant data loss.

- If any resident experiences noticeable changes in their water quality, MDT is available to respond on short notice.

MDT plans to have their consultant conduct sampling at MDT Plains later this spring. MDT will evaluate practices that will allow the sampling to be conducted safely. For example, the consultant may collect samples from outside spigots, but not from indoor taps.

I spoke with MDT's Brian Goodman earlier today, and he is comfortable with this information being shared online.

Please let me know if you need additional information.

Laura Alvey
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