Technical Expert Working Group Conference Call

Friday November 30, 2007
10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

CALL SUMMARY

Attendees:

EPA Region 3 and contractors: Rick Rogers, Jennie Saxe, Lisa Donahue, Chuck Kanetsky, Karen Sklenar, and Laura Dufresne

The Washington Aqueduct: Patty Gamby, Mike Chicoine, Tom Jacobus, and Anne Spiesman

DCWASA and contractors: Rich Giani and John Civardi

George Washington University: Marina Moses

Falls Church City: Bob Etres

Arlington County: Dave Hundelt

DC Department of the Environment: William Slade and Collin Burrell

DC Department of Health: V. Sreenivas

Agenda

There were no changes or additions to the agenda. The meeting agenda is included as Attachment A to this call summary.

Summary of Discussions by Topic Area

1. Status of Aqueduct Control Pipe Loop

Patty Gamby distributed the Draft Final Pipe Loop Report along with attachments to the TEWG prior to the conference call. Patty noted that the report contained nothing new that the TEWG had not already discussed.

Although dissolved lead levels were very low and trended slightly with temperature, Rich Giani asked about the total lead spikes in the summer months in Rack 7, noting that they are not seeing the same trend in distribution system samples. Patty responded that the lead levels from the loop study are not expected to imitate distribution system values. Instead, they were looking for relative differences and trends. Rich Giani asked if the report could provide an explanation of the high total lead in warmer months.

2. WASA Pipe Loop Status

Rich Giani provided a graph of the DCWASA control pipe loop prior to the TEWG call. He noted that the lead release in the loop has stabilized, with levels generally between 5 and 10 parts per billion (ppb). He also noted that DCWASA does not observe the same temperature swings at Fort Reno as WA observes at the Dalecarlia plant.

3. WASA LCR Update

Rich Giani reported that DCWASA has completed their compliance monitoring for the second half of 2007. He noted that although DCWASA should meet the action levels based on first draw samples, second draw samples are somewhat high. DCWASA investigated high second draw samples from the first half of 2007 and found that all were from homes with galvanized steel piping. Many samples with high lead levels also exhibit high iron concentrations. Rich reported that DCWASA is investigating those homes that frequently exceed the lead action level for galvanic piping effects.

4. EPA HQ Causative Events Report

Rick Rogers briefed the TEWG on the newly released EPA causative events study, available online at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lcrmr/pdfs/report_lcmr_elevatedleadindc_final.pdf . The report was finalized in late spring / early summer 2007 and released in August 2007. The study was originally called a "forensic analysis", but the name was changed to avoid potential negative connotations associated with the word "forensic." The goal of the study was to provide an independent review of the data and circumstances under which lead levels increased in DC tap water. To remain independent, EPA headquarters oversaw the study, using a different support contract than the one used by EPA Region 3, and did not allow it to go out for comment by TEWG. The report was promised to congressional committees and has been shared with state agencies and the regulated community. Karen Sklenar noted that she saw the report presented by EPA at the recent annual conference of the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators.

Rick emphasized that the report found nothing new. The authors did put more emphasis on pH management from the early 1990's through 2004. They believe that seasonal swings in pH over time could have made the corrosion scale more sensitive to chloramines. Their key findings, however, were consistent with TEWG findings: the change from chlorine to chloramines and subsequent drop in oxidation state of the water caused the lead release.

Rick noted that there was very little in the way of media coverage when the report was released. The Washington Post ran one paragraph, but EPA Region 3 did not receive any calls or questions regarding the report.

5. LCR Short-Term Revisions

Lisa Donahue provided an overview of the short-term revisions to the LCR. The revisions were promulgated in October 2007, with April 2008 as the effective date for the D.C. systems. Lisa highlighted the following changes:

- Monitoring schedule requirements: if a system is on any type of reduced monitoring, they must take samples during the June to September timeframe. Systems taking triennial samples must take them on a three-year time interval (i.e., they must take all samples during one summer, then wait three years and sample again).

- Systems are required to notify customers of sampling results (DCWASA was already doing this).

- Notification requirements for changes in water treatment: Previously, systems were required to notify their regulatory agency within 60 days after a change in treatment. Under the short-term revisions, systems must provide advanced notification and gain primacy agency approval for changes that could increase the corrosion of lead.

- The short-term revisions clarify what types of treatment changes require primacy agency notification and approval.

- Public education: The public education requirements in the original LCR have been revised to increase flexibility. With a few exceptions, systems must cover certain topics, using plain language and subject to approval by the state, rather than use the exact language as provided in the original LCR. EPA will develop templates for systems that don't have resources to write public education language themselves.

- The short-term revisions contain a new requirement for the subset of systems that has exceeded the action level and implemented lead service line replacements. If these systems exceed the lead action level again in the future and have to resume lead service line replacement, they must include in their inventory those sites that "tested out" of the previous replacement program based on sampling.

6. Potomac Perchlorate Monitoring Study

Rick Rogers summarized the status of EPA's Perchlorate Monitoring Study. The first round of samples was collected from eight utilities along the Potomac River in October 2007. Raw water perchlorate concentrations ranged from 0.04 to 7.63 ppb. In treated water, concentrations ranged from 0.05 to 5.86 ppb. Samples from WA were approximately 1.2 to 1.4 ppb for both raw and treated water.

Monitoring will continue for one year to establish a baseline for perchlorate occurrence in the Potomac River. EPA plans to investigate the potential sources of perchlorate. If point sources are identified as major contributors, EPA may be able to reduce perchlorate levels through NPDES permitting.

Rick asked TEWG members to keep an eye out for large fireworks displays. EPA found that in at least one case, high levels of perchlorate in a drinking water source may have been caused by a fireworks display the day before. If EPA finds high perchlorate levels during their monitoring study, they would like to evaluate activities in the area like fireworks as potential causes.

7. Potomac Crypto Study

Chuck Kanetsky provided an overview of the *Cryptosporidium* Source Tracking Project along with a summary of findings to date. The study is a joint effort between the Potomac River Basin Drinking Water Source Protection Partnership, CDC, and EPA with funds provided through an EPA Regional grant. Key goals of the study are to identify the most prevalent types of *Cryptosporidium* oocysts in the Potomac River Basin and gather information on human health risks. Samples are being collected at five locations in the basin over a 1-year period during normal and storm flow conditions. They are analyzed using the standard EPA method 1623 as wells as a CDC genotyping method to identify the specific species.

Chuck summarized results to date since the monitoring began in October 2006. There have been very few detects using EPA method 1623; however, there have been frequent detects using the CDC method, usually for samples collected during storm and base flow events. As of last month, there have been no detects for human infectious genotypes. The project will include sampling during one more storm event and should be wrapped up in March 2008.

8. Action Items, Agenda Items, and Other Issues

Rick Rogers informed the TEWG that EPA Region 3 had gotten a FOIA from the Environmental Working Group (EWG) requesting all chemical water quality data. He believes that they are starting another investigation similar to the DBP study published in July of this year.

Attachment A: Call Agenda

- Status of Aqueduct control pipe loop
- WASA pipe loop status
- WASA LCR update
- EPA HQ "Causative events" report (http://www.epa.gov/safewater/crmr/lead_review.html#dcreview) – quick overview by EPA
- LCRSTRR (Lead and Copper rule Short-term Regulatory Revisions of October 2007)
- Potomac perchlorate sampling project – EPA update
- Potomac Crypto study – EPA update
- Call schedule for 2008