Legislation Text

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Calling on the United States Department of Justice to conduct a complete and thorough investigation of the water supply disaster in Flint, Michigan that may have exposed 99,763 people to lead poisoning.

WHEREAS, In April 2014, Flint changed its municipal water source to the Flint River in place of the Detroit water system in order to save money during a budget crisis at the approval of the Snyder administration; and

WHEREAS, Even after residents began to complain about the water seeming tainted, smelling foul, and being the likely cause of health symptoms like rash and hair loss in the summer of 2014, the city of Flint and the State of Michigan continued to allow the residents to use Flint River water; and

WHEREAS, Although confirmed traces of E. Coli and coliform bacteria were found in the water in September 2015, the state continued to allow Flint to use the Flint River as a water supply, recommending that they boil the water before use; and

WHEREAS, Even after the state issued a notice acknowledging unlawful levels of trihalomethanes in the water, a chemical linked to cancer and other diseases, the administration continued to allow Flint residents to consume the tainted water; and

WHEREAS, In a February 2015 Virginia Tech study, lead levels of 104 parts per billion (ppb) were found in one Flint resident's home. This level is well above the EPA threshold for enforcement of 15 ppb, and the Snyder administration failed to reevaluate their decision to have Flint use water from the Flint River; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 8,657 children and a total population of 99,763 people may have been exposed to lead, risking lead poisoning which can cause developmental defects, learning difficulties, weight loss, fatigue, vomiting, hearing loss in children, memory loss, mood disorders, joint pain, kidney damage and reproductive problems in adults; and

WHEREAS, Elevated lead levels in children in Flint, Michigan doubled after switching to the Flint River as a water supply; and

WHEREAS, Governor Snyder only mandated a switch back to the Detroit water system after irrefutable evidence was presented that there were heightened levels of lead in water fountains in three schools in Flint in October 2015, meaning the city of Flint's public water supply was toxic for 18 months; and

WHEREAS, The city of Flint, Michigan is now in a state of emergency as of January 16, 2016 and the National Guard has been called upon to distribute bottled water to its residents that still cannot access safe water due to the residual effects of using the Flint River as their main water supply; and

WHEREAS, It is, at this point, impossible to calculate how long it will be until the residents of Flint, Michigan will have access to safe tap water again; and

WHEREAS, The United States Justice Department launched an investigation into the Flint, Michigan water supply disaster in early January 2016 and the investigation is ongoing; and

WHEREAS, No apology from Governor Snyder and his administration can undo the damage done to the people of Flint who have been exposed to such dangers as E. coli, nervous system damage, kidney damage, liver damage, and especially children who have been exposed to possible lead poisoning; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby calls on the United States Department of Justice to conduct a complete and thorough investigation of the water supply disaster in Flint, Michigan that was launched in January 2016.

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