



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MAR 15 2016

OFFICE OF WATER

Dear Honorable Leader:

There is no higher priority for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency than protecting public health and ensuring the safety of our nation's drinking water. Under the Safe Drinking Water Act, the EPA has primary responsibility for the implementation and enforcement of drinking water regulations in almost all of Indian country; the Navajo Nation maintains primacy for most systems on the Navajo Reservation. Recent events in Flint, Michigan, have led to important discussions about the safety of our nation's drinking water supplies. I am writing today to update you on some of the actions we are taking to strengthen the implementation of our safe drinking water programs.

The EPA will work with tribes to identify and address deficiencies in current implementation of the Lead and Copper Rule. We also plan to conduct training for tribal, state, and public water systems staff to ensure that all water systems understand how to carry out the requirements of the LCR. We want to ensure that appropriate actions are being taken to address lead action level exceedances at all public water systems, including effective public health communication and outreach to residents with steps to reduce exposures to lead.

In addition to reaching out to you, I sent letters to state agencies and the Navajo Nation, which have enforcement authority, or primacy, for ensuring safe drinking water under the Safe Drinking Water Act. These letters ask for continued partnership in the implementation of the Lead and Copper Rule and lay out specific, near-term activities that are essential to restore public confidence in our shared work to ensure safe drinking water for the American people.

While the EPA has primacy in almost all of Indian country, we recognize that the effective protection of the nation's drinking water is a shared concern involving tribal governments, public water system owners and operators, consumers, and other stakeholders. In the coming weeks and months, we will be working with tribal governments and public water systems in Indian country to improve sustainability of our drinking water systems, including:

- Enhancing regulatory oversight at all levels of government;
- Using information technology to ensure transparency and accountability with regard to reporting and public availability of drinking water compliance data; and
- Leveraging funding sources to finance infrastructure investments.

Thank you in advance for your support as we work with you to ensure safe drinking water in Indian country. Please do not hesitate to contact me, and your staff may contact Peter Grevatt, Director of the Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water at grevatt.peter@epa.gov or 202-564-8954.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joel Beauvais". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Joel Beauvais
Deputy Assistant Administrator