New Jersey Lead in Drinking Water Issues Summary

Talking Points:

- The City of Newark has recently alerted New Jersey and EPA that they have elevated lead levels in drinking water at 30 of their schools.

- In addition, Passaic Valley water Commission has reported that their most recent monitoring shows that they exceed the action level for lead in this water system serving 300,000.

- The Region is performing thorough compliance reviews of all PWS in NJ that are currently exceeding Lead Action Level (AL), we will be on site at (PVWC) during the week of March 21, 2016, and conduct additional reviews following that. The purpose will be to make sure steps are being taken as per the regulations and that any violations are addressed.

- In addition to guidance given to state program officials and letters to governors the Region will also conduct extensive file reviews to assure states are implementing the Lead and Copper Rule. Staff will begin conducting these reviews on April 18, 2016.

- EPA has been asked and is assisting New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and Newark Schools as they work to test all their schools following elevated lead levels at 30 of their schools based on their own testing.

- Region 2 has had a continuing program to partner with school districts to voluntarily implement the 3Ts (Training, Testing, and Telling) Guidance for lead in school drinking water.

- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has shown interest in advising all school districts to test and we will assist as needed in explaining the guidance and sharing our experience.

Background:

Passaic Valley Water Commission– Serves 300,000 People including City of Patterson

- PVWC exceeded the AL in 2015 (PB90 = 0.017 mg/L), before that they had 5 years of results below the Action level. They have completed public education and shared lead tap results with households tested. The have offered lead testing for all its consumers and offered to replace lead service lines at/below cost for any customer that requests.

- Historically PVWC has relied on ph/alkalinity adjustment for corrosion control due to limitations presented by the uncovered finished water reservoirs. They would like to add orthophosphate, but can only do that after they have eliminated the reservoirs.

- PVWC is under a State Administrative Consent Order (ACO) that requires uncovered reservoirs to be eliminated and also includes a phased approach for installing corrosion control inhibitor.

- As part of the Region 2 Strategy to Review Lead and Copper Rule Compliance, PVWC will be the first water system to receive a detailed compliance review by our enforcement staff. We have notified PVWC and we will have four staff at PVWC during the week of March 21st.

Brick Township MUA – Serves 80,000 People - This large water system is also currently exceeding lead AL, they have reportedly conducted all required follow-up actions the Region will conduct a detailed compliance review following the completion of PVWC review.

Bally's Park Place – Non Community Water System that serves 6000 in Atlantic City NJ - This is a medium water system that recently exceeded lead AL, State has required that they perform public education and the Region will also conduct a detailed compliance review here.

Morristown Hospital – This Hospital with its own water system had a corrosion control treatment failure and subsequently exceeded lead AL. NJDEP has required the hospital to provide bottled water and is taking further enforcement action.

Small Water Systems Exceeding AL – There are 23 Small water systems including 8 Schools with their own water systems that are exceeding lead AL, through on site reviews and information collection letters, the Region will do a compliance evaluation of all of them within the next 60 days.

Lead in School Drinking Water – Served by Municipal Water Systems

- Newark – On March 7, 2016 Newark City Schools notified NJDEP that their independent testing showed elevated levels of lead in drinking water taps in 30 schools. The following day NJDEP asked for EPA assistance and worked with Newark to shut off taps and provide bottled water to schools, until follow-up sampling could be conducted. NJDEP has provided a draft sampling plan to EPA for review and EPA has provided comments. We will work with the State and the District to assure proper follow-up sampling is completed at all schools using the EPA 3-Ts Guidance.

- Other NJ Schools – The Region has a longstanding program of partnering with School Districts to voluntarily implement the 3-Ts guidance and we are currently working with Bayonne, where EPA will conduct sampling in April and Camden where discussions have just started. Traditionally we have worked with about two school districts in the Region annually. Additionally NJDEP is considering advising all school districts to test for lead following EPA guidance and asked if we would be willing to help provide training on the Guidance, we have responded that we will assist.

- On March 14, 2016 NJ State Senators introduced what they described as a "common sense" bill requiring tests at every school and remediation treatment, if necessary, they wrote. The bill would allocate $3 million to perform the water tests.

Blood Lead Levels

- Newark will test up to 17,000 children for lead poisoning after elevated levels were found in the drinking water at nearly half of the schools. Testing will start with some 2,000 toddlers who attend early childhood centers. A specific date hasn't been set yet to get blood samples from the children.

- The state of New Jersey reported 3,398 new cases of children less than six years old with elevated blood-lead levels above 5 µg/dL in 2015. The incidence rate for the state is 19 (per 1,000 children tested). The total number of children tested during 2015 was 175,668.

- Newark reported 417 new cases of children less than six years old with elevated blood-lead levels above 5 µg/dL in 2015. The incidence rate for Newark, NJ, is the highest in the state at 29 (per 1,000 children tested). The total number of children tested in Newark during 2015 was 14,371.

Questions and Answers:

Do you think that every school in NJ should be tested for lead in drinking water? *Yes based on our experience schools that test using the EPA guidance do find outlets with elevated levels*

Is the Drinking water in Newark Schools safe? *The schools that had elevated lead levels in their drinking water are being supplied bottled water for drinking and cooking.*

What assistance is EPA providing to the City of Newark*? We are working with NJDEP to develop a sampling plan based on EPA's guidance to sample all schools and we will work with Newark and NJDEP as they implement that plan.*