To: Tierney, MaryAnn[MaryAnn.Tierney@fema.dhs.gov]
From: Garvin, Shawn
Sent: Fri 4/4/2014 3:19:08 PM
Subject: RE: Water Contamination Response

MaryAnn – I hope you are doing well. Sorry I didn't get back to you sooner, but I wasn't really sure how to respond to your message. My perspective on this is completely different, and it may be best if we can find some time in the near future to sit down and discuss it further. My folks were on the ground at the site in WV almost immediately, and were connected into the RRCC on the evening of Jan. 9, and had someone physically in the RRCC at 10:00 am on Jan 10. It must be noted that we did not receive a mission statement from FEMA until Jan. 11, though we were already engaged in providing support in Charleston, WV and at the RRCC in Philadelphia on the 9th & 10th. Our response to this incident is beyond question, and we are still engaged. Your message below is could lead people to think otherwise. I would appreciate it if in the future if you have any questions or concerns to pick up the phone and call me. Either way, I will schedule a meeting so that we can talk and ensure there are no communication issues in the future.

Thank you – Shawn

Shawn M. Garvin

Regional Administrator

US EPA Region III

2215-814-2900

From: Tierney, MaryAnn [mailto:MaryAnn.Tierney@fema.dhs.gov]
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2014 2:07 PM
To: Garvin, Shawn
Subject: Water Contamination Response

Hi Shawn:

I hope you are doing well. FEMA Region III was very busy the first few months of the year; we were activated for one emergency or another 6 of the first 8 weeks. So, this note is a little late in getting to you due to that, but I wanted to open a dialogue with you about the WV Water Contamination Response.

First, I want to thank for the support your office provided to FEMA Region III during the recent chemical spill that affected hundreds of thousands of West Virginians who were unable to drink their water for over a week. As you know, FEMA Region III activated the Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) to the highest activation level - Level 1. As a part of this activation, the EPA was mission assigned to provide technical support to the RRCC, which allowed FEMA Senior Leadership and FEMA field teams to access critical environmental protection subject matter expertise and situational awareness.

While the support was appreciated, I want to bring to your attention that I perceived there to be a delay in the arrival of the EPA representative at the RRCC which directly affected our ability to make decisions regarding the Federal response posture needed for this incident. While I understand that no notice incidents are dynamic and can create challenges for Federal agencies to "spin up" their capabilities, it is imperative that when mission assigned, support be provided with as little delay as possible. I also know the weather was particularly nasty the morning of January 10th which contributed to the delay.

During the evening of January 9, 2014 FEMA Region III conducted a conference call with all mission assigned Federal agencies to review the immediate next steps, which included deploying representatives to the RRCC. On this call the EPA representative specifically asked if a physical presence was required, to which we acknowledged yes and that the person needed to arrive as soon as possible. When an EPA representative was still not on site the following morning several attempts were made to understand what was causing the delayed, but we were unable to garner when a representative would arrive.

At that point I contacted your Deputy Regional Administrator who was extremely helpful in shedding light on the current status of EPA's response. I expressed my frustration with the lack of a representative to provide much needed technical assistance and he was helpful in sending someone from your office to our location. He indicated that the weather may have delayed the individual's arrival. However, with your office being so close to ours it is difficult to understand why an alternate was not assigned if that is the case.

As you know, the EPA played a significant support role to FEMA and West Virginia during the initial hours of this event, as the scope and severity were unclear and evolving. Most notably, the lack of easily obtainable information about the chemical became critical and underscored the necessity to have subject matter expertise deploy in a timely fashion to the RRCC. The absence of EPA in the beginning hours of the activation created a deficit in the ability to properly assess the situation and make crucial operational decisions regarding the deployment of staff and commodities.

I have directed my staff to modify or develop procedures that support our partners in deploying resources and enhance coordination in support of incidents. I request you also review any internal timelines to determine changes necessary to expedite a future deployment request.

Please feel free to contact me if you wish to further discuss this at (215) 931-5600, or via email at maryann.tierney@dhs.gov. Our Response Division Director, John McGowan, is also available to your staff should you wish to collaborate further on enhancing our response efforts. John can be reached at (215) 931-2897, or via email at john.mcgowan@fema.dhs.gov.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and I appreciate the opportunity to engage in this dialogue. I look forward to a continued partnership to effectively respond to and recover from disasters of all kinds.

MaryAnn Tierney

Regional Administrator, FEMA Region III

215-931-5600 (office)

215-687-3090 (mobile)

maryann.tierney@fema.dhs.gov