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From: Bissonette, Eric
Sent: Thur 1/16/2014 1:23:34 PM
Subject: From Greater Cincinnati Water Works – chronology of GCWW preparation re: the WV spill impact on Cincinnati

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GCWW Monitoring Ohio River, Taking Precautions After W. Va. Chemical Spill

Update: Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2014 – 4:30 p.m.

Greater Cincinnati Water Works is detecting the Elk River Spill, identified as 4-methylcyclohexane methanol, at levels between 10 and 30 parts per billion (PPB) in the raw Ohio River Water. Drinking water is not affected.

It is important to note that 30 ppb is equal to 0.03 parts per million (PPM). The CDC says the chemical is safe at levels below one PPM. What GCWW is detecting in the raw Ohio River water is well below what the CDC considers safe.

As a precautionary measure, GCWW shut down its intakes shortly before midnight on Tuesday, January 14 to reduce risk and protect our water supply.

Update Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2014:

The Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW) continues to carefully monitor the Ohio River and is taking all necessary precautions as a result of a chemical spill that occurred last week on the Elk River near Charleston, West Virginia.

"The safety of our drinking water is our highest priority. Our water is safe and we are taking precautions to keep it safe. Our objective is to protect our water supply and reduce risk to protect public health," said Tony Parrott, Director of GCWW and the Metropolitan Sewer District Joint Utility Management.

GCWW shut down its intakes shortly before midnight on Tuesday, Jan. 14. The chemical, identified as 4-methylcyclohexane methanol, was detected in an up stream river sample late Tuesday evening. GCWW has been collecting samples between Maysville, KY and Cincinnati.

Once the chemical was detected in samples taken at the Meldahl Dam -- which is approximately 25 miles upstream of the Greater Cincinati Water Works' Richard Miller Treatment Plant -- GCWW shut its intakes to prevent Ohio River water from entering its facility.

The Elk River chemical spill arrived in the Cincinnati area and was detected in the Ohio River near GCWW's Richard Miller Treatment Plant this morning at approximately 7 a.m.

GCWW is working closely with the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO) to track the spill and conduct ongoing water sampling analysis. We anticipate the bulk of the spill to pass through our area within the next 24-to-48 hours, depending on river and weather conditions.

GCWW continues to supplement its water supply using its groundwater plant located in Fairfield. Customers should not experience a disruption in water service.

Original Message:

The Greater Cincinnati Water Works is carefully monitoring the Ohio River and taking all necessary precautions as a result of a chemical spill that occurred last week on the Elk River near Charleston, West Virginia. The Elk River feeds into an Ohio River tributary about 200 miles upstream of Cincinnati.

The chemical has been identified as 4-methylcyclohexame methanol (methl-cyclohexane methanol). This is used in the coal mining industry, specifically for coal washing and preparation.

The safety of our drinking water is the highest priority. Our objective is to protect our water supply.

Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW) is working closely with the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO) and other organizations to track the spill and conduct source water sampling to keep our water safe. ORSANCO uses 13 monitoring stations along the Ohio River to detect and warn treatment plants downstream about spills so they can take precautionary measures before the spill reaches their intakes.

The spill is expected to reach the Cincinnati area between 7 and 9 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2014.

GCWW will shut down its intakes as a precautionary measure.

If needed, GCWW can supplement its water supply from the Bolton Treatment Plant in Fairfield, which is a groundwater plant. Source water from the Bolton Treatment Plant will not be affected by this spill.

Eric M. Bissonette

Chief of Staff

Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water

US EPA

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