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Ohio EPA Orders Camden to Obtain New Drinking Water Source

*Village Abandons Agreement to Tie in to Southwest Regional;
Ohio EPA Director Declares a Drinking Water Emergency*

Ohio EPA Director Chris Korleski has determined that a water supply emergency exists in Camden and has ordered the village to come up with a way to provide village residents with drinking water that is both safe and palatable by October 30.

“This is an emergency and should be taken seriously,” Korleski said. “Ohio EPA will continue to work with local officials to appropriately deal with this situation. However, village leaders need to move quickly to find a solution that provides safe drinking water to the residents of Camden.”

His action comes two weeks after village mayor Gunter Sylvanis, Jr., agreed on behalf of the village to tie in to Southwest Regional’s water system, and eight days after Camden village council agreed; however council reversed its support Friday and notified Ohio EPA that the village would break off its attempts to connect to the regional water system. The village did not notify the Agency of what its plans are to provide potable water.

Beginning in late July, village residents began noticing a salty taste to their drinking water. Since then, the village has exceeded the chloride standards in each of its three wells. Water from wells two and three is unpalatable for human consumption. The chloride level in well one continues to increase and it is very likely that concentrations in the near future will make the water unpalatable. By discontinuing efforts to connect to the regional water system, the village has demonstrated that it has not taken the necessary action to provide an alternate supply of potable water in adequate quantity.

Therefore, the director issued orders requiring the village to:

- continue to provide bottled water, (at least two gallons per day per household), until an alternative approved water source is obtained;
- no later than October 30, 2010, connect to or establish an alternate approved water supply which meets all primary (health-based) and secondary (aesthetic) drinking water standards;
- produce at least 160,000 gallons of water per day; and
- submit detailed plans for the option chosen no later than September 30, 2010. The final connection must be in place no later than October 30, 2010.

Failure to adhere to these orders could result in a referral to the Ohio Attorney General’s office and potentially, loss of the village’s license to operate a drinking water system.

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