



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

January 12, 2005

INFORMATION REGARDING HEALTH SERVICES CITATION

To All San Diego Residents:

The City of San Diego Water Department wants you to know that on January 4, 2005, it received a citation from the California Department of Health Services (CDHS) for violation of the Federal and State Safe Drinking Water Acts. While the Water Department admits it made mistakes in the testing and reporting of water samples, it is important to know that the drinking water in San Diego continues to be perfectly safe.

Due to a reporting error and a suspected sampling error, a single water sample exceeded a Primary (health-related) Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) and the City failed to report this finding to the CDHS in a timely manner.

On November 8, 2004, a routine water sample collected on Desert View Drive in La Jolla tested positive for total coliform bacteria. The Federal and State laws allow for a very low level of positive total coliform occurrences. A single positive sample is not an MCL violation, nor is it an indication of problems in the water system. However, whenever total coliforms are detected, the law requires repeat samples to be taken at nearby locations.

On November 12, 2004, a repeat sample on Desert View Drive was also found to contain total coliforms (in this case *E. coli*). This sampling result triggered the primary MCL violation. As repeat samples taken along Desert View Drive on November 13, 2004, and 467 other samples taken from throughout the water system in November did not contain *E. coli*, the Water Department suspected that a sampling error had occurred. This caused an excessive delay in reporting the violation to the CDHS resulting in the citation. The Water Department regrets this error and has since made changes to its sampling and reporting systems so it doesn't occur again.

The CDHS citation requires the Water Department to publish a public notification in the *San Diego Union-Tribune* within 14 days and inform the general public by mail within 45 days. We apologize that this incident occurred and for the resulting citation. We want to assure you that all necessary precautions have been taken to maintain a healthy and safe water supply. If you have any questions, please contact our Water Quality Laboratory at (619) 668-3232 or our Public Information Office at (619) 527-3121 or (619) 533-4185.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank Belock".

Frank Belock
Water Department Director

