Six Charged with Felonies in Flint Water Crisis

Six state employees face charges of misconduct, conspiring to commit misconduct in office and willful neglect of duty related to allegedly concealing or disregarding test results showing high levels of lead in the bloodstream of Flint residents.

Six state employees were criminally charged in district court Friday in connection with the ongoing water crisis in Flint, Mich. Three employees of Michigan’s Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and three state health department workers were charged with concealing unsafe lead levels.


All six face charges of misconduct in office, conspiring to commit misconduct in office and willful neglect of duty related to allegedly concealing or disregarding test results showing high levels of lead in the bloodstream of Flint residents.

In April, Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette announced felony charges against two Michigan DEQ officials and one Flint city official. At that time, Schuette promised more criminal charges would be coming.
Of the three initially charged, the city employee, Mike Glasgow, pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor and is cooperating with the investigation as other charges were dropped. The two DEQ employees, Stephen Busch and Mike Prysby, are awaiting preliminary examinations.

Schuette later brought a civil lawsuit against engineering and consulting firms who had consulted on the Flint Water Treatment Plant. The civil suit, filed in Flint in Genesee County Circuit Court, accuses engineering firm Lockwood, Andrews & Newnam and environmental consultant Veolia North America, and related companies, of causing “the Flint Water Crisis to occur, continue and worsen.”

Both companies have vowed to fight the lawsuit, denying any wrongdoing.

Flint’s drinking water supply was first contaminated with lead starting in April 2014 when the city, while under the control of a state-appointed emergency manager, switched the source of supply from Lake Huron water supplied by the City of Detroit to Flint River water treated at Flint’s city treatment plant. Michigan DEQ officials have since acknowledged they made a mistake when they failed to require the needed corrosion control chemicals to be added to the water.

As a result, lead leached from pipes and fixtures into the drinking water and tests showed lead levels spiked in the blood of some Flint children. Although the city switched back to Detroit water in October 2015, officials say the potential for harm continues because of damage done to Flint’s water distribution infrastructure. Recently, city has been pursuing an affordable program to begin replacing lead service lines.