



## ***Stamford Water Quality – Board of Representatives***

Susan Nabel, Chair

Gail Okun, Vice Chair

# **Committee Report**

**Date:** Thursday, June 22, 2017

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.

**Place:** Democratic Caucus Room, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Government Center, 888  
Washington Boulevard, Stamford, CT

The Stamford Water Quality Committee met at the above date and time. In attendance were Chair Nabel, Vice Chair Okun and Committee member Rep. Savage. Absent or excused were Committee Member Reps. Day and Silver. Also present were Jennifer Calder, Director of Health; Jim Federici, Lab Director and Stephen Cole, CAP member.

Chair Nabel called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Committee Action</b>
1 WQ29.008	REVIEW; Stamford Well Water Testing Program (§§ 143-14 & 143-15) 05/04/17 – Submitted by Dr. Calder and Rep. Nabel	<b>Report Made</b>

Mr. Federici reviewed the current water testing program, which is set to expire in December:

- There is currently no waiting list
- The City has tested 71 private wells this year
- The percentages have remained the same: 12% above the action level for uranium and less than 4% for pesticides
- There have been a total of 2300 tests since the program began in 2013; it has tapered off
- There are 5200 wells in Stamford (the others may have tested privately)
- This year the City has received 82 outside reports in connection with land transfers

Dr. Calder, Mr. Cole, Mr. Federici and the Committee discussed where to go from here. Dr. Calder noted that this does not give a full picture of the condition of the wells in the City of Stamford, since not all tests are reported. The City is supposed to receive reports in connection with land transfers, but there are no teeth in the ordinance. There is a conflict between “best practices” from a health

perspective and homeowner privacy interests. Dr. Calder compared this to testing children for lead levels.

There is a mandatory coliform test at the time of a property transfer. Could the City also require testing for arsenic and uranium? The City does not have the facilities to do the uranium or pesticide testing.

The Committee would have to check with the Law Department to see if imposing a requirement in connection with any land transfers would conflict with State law.

Would this be necessary, given that the City did not find the level of contamination they anticipated in the wells tested by the lab? Dr. Calder does not believe that routine testing for pesticides would be warranted, given the State's findings.

Arsenic is not a problem in Stamford and lead has not been a problem in the well-water samples the City has taken. This year there were no samples above the action level for pesticides. Lead continues to be a problem, but this is not generally from well water.

Dr. Calder would want to require testing for coliform and lead in connection with land transfers and would want to distinguish between homes on municipal water and those with wells. Stamford has not had an arsenic problem and has not had a lead problem in well water. Less than 4% have been above the action level for pesticides. This year, none of the samples tested this year were above the action level.

For those reasons, it seems as if pesticides, arsenic and lead would be good to include in the property transfer testing. Dr. Calder is not sure if uranium should be tested for. She believes testing for lead should be done on properties without well water.

The question is whether the testing program should be continued and if so, should it be continued in its current format. The results and participation do not necessarily support continuing it in this format.

As a local health department the City does have the right to be more stringent than the State and to require reporting of testing. This does not run afoul of confidentiality requirements.

Her recommendation is mandatory reporting of testing, so they would know which wells have been tested, since they have no way of knowing which wells have been privately tested. Mr. Cole sees no justification to continue the program. Public awareness has been raised, the data has not suggested a catastrophe. Dr. Calder is not convinced that the City has a robust sample, but is also not convinced that people haven't tested their wells privately. Continuing

the current program is probably beating a dead horse. They should continue to push the message for potability testing, but any testing should be reported to the Health Department, which would allow them to track any potential problem. Maybe there should be requirement of disclosure of any knowledge of lead in the water in connection with any property transfer. Usually lead comes from old pipes in the house, rather than wells.

Dr. Calder would like to include uranium level tested in connection with a property transfer and have mandatory reporting of any potability testing done.

Based on this discussion, the sense of the committee is to allow the current program to expire and to require the testing in connection with a property transfer to include testing for uranium and to explore an ordinance mandating reporting by labs to the Health Department of any well water testing done in Stamford and to encourage home buyers to have their water tested. They will have one more meeting in order to get public input on allowing this program to lapse.

Nothing will prevent homeowners from having their water tested privately. They are working on ways to make testing easier for homeowners.

Chair Nabel adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Nabel, Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).