



JAMES M. CAHILL, MAYOR  
**THE CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK**

November 25, 2020

Dear New Brunswick Water Utility Customer:

This letter is to provide additional information regarding the recent notice you may have received concerning the pH level in your drinking water. pH measures the acidity or basicity (non-acidic) properties of a water sample. Results from routine testing and analysis showed that the pH levels on some samples fell slightly outside the parameters set by the State Department of Environmental Protection during a recent monitoring period.

This was caused by a change in the pH testing procedure initiated by the Water Utility earlier this year. Due to the initial COVID-19 outbreak, in an effort to minimize potential coronavirus exposure to property owners, tenants and Water Utility technicians, the Water Utility's sampling locations were changed from indoor, climate-controlled environments (such as homes and businesses) to outdoor sites like fire hydrants. This change in sample sites resulted in sampling of water with slightly different characteristics, like temperature and aeration, both of which will have an effect on pH as measured. Outdoor samples are non-aerated which produces lower pH levels. In addition, outdoor samples are generally at colder temperatures which can also produce lower pH levels. The change in sampling locations changed the sample water characteristics enough to cause a reduction in pH slightly below the DEP's minimum standard.

The pH level of water is important because it can affect the release of lead or copper into drinking water. Fortunately, as part of its routine testing, the Water Utility also tests for lead and copper and the round of testing for 2020 has demonstrated that the City remains compliant within the Lead and Copper Rule and continued to remain at safe levels and well within the parameters established by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

It is also important to note that during the January to June 2020 sampling period, the Water Utility dramatically increased the number of test samples taken to ensure the change in methodology did not adversely impact the quality of water.

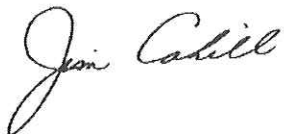
The NJDEP requires the Water Utility to conduct 20 test samples during a 6-month period. If there are 9 excursions (instances where the pH level fell outside the NJDEP parameters) a violation occurs. The Water Utility conducted 120 test samples during the 6-month testing period at the beginning of this year. However, it is still considered a technical violation if there are 9 excursions, even with the greater number of test samples taken. It is for this reason that the notice of the violation was sent. I hasten to add that the Water Utility is following the same procedure for the second half of 2020.

There is nothing you need to do. As was noted in the earlier notice, this is NOT an emergency. The water provided by the Water Utility is and continues to be well within safe levels for drinking and cooking.

Going forward, the Water Utility will continue the significantly greater number of pH test samples and is doubling the amount of lead and copper samples taken. In addition, the Water Utility will be working with the NJDEP to establish new sampling and reporting quality control procedures that are COVID-19 appropriate and provide a true assessment of the pH levels of the Utility's water supply.

I hope you find this letter helpful. If you should have any questions or require anything further, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jim Cahill". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

JIM CAHILL