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June 20, 2006

Mayor David J. Cieslewicz
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard
Room 403
Madison, Wisconsin 53703-3345

Dear Mayor Cieslewicz:

I am writing to state that I support the renewal of David Denig-Chakroff's contract as the general manager of the Madison Water Utility. Although recent press reports have highlighted some issues at the utility that need to be resolved, there are a significant number of positive things that the utility has been doing with Dave's guidance. Many of these positive items were highlighted in your recently proposed initiative to protect and improve Madison's drinking water. It is my experience that Dave routinely asks what can be done to improve the utility, he implements plans that allow for that improvement to take place, and he guides the utility to go above and beyond regulatory requirements. Among the positive items:

- The utility has developed wellhead protection plans for both new and existing wells. The commitment of utility resources to do this is above and beyond required action. I am confident that Dave will be able to accelerate the schedule even further, as announced in your initiative.
- Several years ago, the utility decided to stop using Unit Well 10 on a year-round basis because of the elevated levels of manganese in the well, showing an interest in improving the aesthetic quality of water in the area served by that well. Although this action may have caused some unexpected problems in the interim, the utility importantly responded to these problems by conducting an extensive manganese occurrence survey in the affected area, by developing an aggressive flushing program to remove the manganese from the affected area, and by developing a substantial program to monitor the success of the flushing program. In addition, the utility has developed new policies for the operation of Unit Well 10, which is now used only for emergencies and when needed for the new flushing program. Recently released data are indicating that the program is working.
- In 2002, the utility began participating in water quality research with the University of Wisconsin. The focus of the research has been on bacteriological water quality indicators for which no regulations exist. Again, this showed an interest in going above and beyond water quality regulations. As of this time, two graduate students have completed theses, presented their results to the public at water board meetings, and the utility has implemented increased chlorine doses at Unit Well 26, as recommended by the research.

Current research is focusing on whether the new flushing program is helping to improve bacteriological water quality as well as improving manganese levels. Again, none of this is required by regulatory authorities and the utility should be commended for its approach to ensuring high bacteriological water quality for Madison's citizens.

- The utility developed a unique and widely-hailed approach to mitigate lead exposure resulting from corrosion of lead service lines in the community. This approach involves the community-wide replacement of lead service lines and is currently on target to be complete before the mandated deadline in 2011. The approach used by most utilities is to feed treatment chemicals which essentially place a band-aid on the lead. Madison's approach ultimately ensures long-term compliance with lead requirements.
- Aging infrastructure is a problem for utilities nationwide and the Madison Water Utility took the initiative to develop an infrastructure management plan for the utility. By commissioning this work, the utility demonstrated a desire to determine a rational approach for the long-term replacement of the utility's infrastructure. This plan was presented to the public at a water board meeting within the last year.

I would also like to note that the Water Board reviews Dave's performance on an annual basis. We review his performance in five areas and he has always been commended for exceeding standards or for achieving outstanding performance.

Compared to other utilities, I believe that the Madison Water Utility has been progressive towards improvement of water quality and infrastructure under Dave's direction. As you pointed out in your recent press conference, we know far more about the Madison system than most utilities know about their systems. Although this knowledge sometimes produces controversy, the utility should ultimately be commended for its efforts in gaining this knowledge and implementing changes that address the issues raised by this knowledge. Given all of the positive things that have happened at the utility, I believe Dave will succeed if given the opportunity to implement your initiatives.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Gregory W. Harrington
Water Commissioner

Cc: Madison Alders