

SASY

Schenk-Atwood-Starkweather-Yahara Neighborhood Association

Friday, April 13, 2012

**Mayor Paul Soglin
Office of the Mayor
210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Room 403
City-County Building
Madison, WI 53703-3345**

Dear Mayor Soglin,

As current Chair of SASY -- the Schenk-Atwood-Starkweather-Yahara Neighborhood Association -- I am writing in regards to Well 8, located in our neighborhood. SASY members have been participating for years in the discussions of water quality via the Citizen's Advisor Panel and the Madison Water Utility Board (MWU). For us it is clear that the recent discovery of larger-than-suspected amounts cancer-causing underground contaminants originating on the Madison Kipp Corporation property -- and the recent tests by MWU showing that pumping Well 8 in fact has a direct and immediate effect on Kipp monitoring wells -- constitute a real and current threat to Well 8's water quality, to our health and our children's health.

We write to strongly urge you to keep Well 8 turned off this Summer, except for emergency fire protection alone.

Second, we strongly urge that at least one sentinel well be immediately installed between Madison Kipp and Well 8 -- with a firm deadline date to be fully operational, with meaningful samples taken, and positive proof confirming that pumping Well 8 is not accelerating the draw of Kipp contaminants towards it -- BEFORE any decision can be made to re-start Well 8. In addition, we strongly urge that more sentinel wells be installed soon, to the north of Kipp and the Goodman Community Center, to gather more data points as part of the assessment needed for a longer term plan to protect Madison's water supply.

Third, we strongly urge that the City embark NOW on a strong, aggressive water conservation program, with effective grey-water use and other collection and re-use efforts. Beyond a tiered water pricing system, SASY stands ready to enthusiastically partner with City support, with creative solutions and neighbor-to-neighbor outreach efforts, to become a City-wide example of how low water-use can be achieved with a sustained, enthusiastic and thorough effort. Our understanding of MWU data convinces us that water conservation is vital to the safety of Madison's drinking water supply. With real conservation, Well 8 --even now used only for peak Summer use-- may in fact never need to be pumped at all.

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Fourth, we strongly urge that MWU submit to you a proposed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on Well 8, spelling out in writing exactly how Well 8 may or may not be used this Summer, defining an 'emergency', and defining how the neighborhood would be notified in such an event that Well 8 water is being pumped.

From the MWU meetings I have attended, I'm afraid my impression is that MWU's prevailing approach to manmade pollutants in our City well water is exactly the same as its approach to geologic ones: namely that they are unfortunate but inevitable; that they move underground only slowly over decades; that their presence in our water elicits a response only after extended public attention, and; that there's really nothing to be done except (expensive) filtering after that attention has risen to an uncomfortable level.

We've been told in response to our urging to rest Well 8 until we can be sure it is protected from contamination, that Well 8's water is less contaminated than several nearby wells. MWU staff have frankly acknowledged that their inclination --absent strong pressure otherwise-- is to pump Well 8 until the contaminants in its water reach levels comparable to those of surrounding wells. And then at that point to install costly filters.

We're baffled and dismayed with this short-sighted approach. And we know that PCE's are only one of the current contaminants under discussion; we're well aware that serious new water quality problems lie in Madison's future from pharmaceuticals and other manmade substances.

The four actions outlined above -- i.e, evidence-based decision-making with prudent protection and aggressive water conservation and re-use -- are integrally linked, not separate. We think they represent a proactive way forward to begin to address the unique health and safety issues facing our neighborhood. And that that way forward can become a model for Madison as a whole.

Respectfully,



Lou Host-Jablonski
Chair, SASY (Schenk-Atwood-Starkweather-Yahara Neighborhood Association)

Cc: Madison Water Utility; Alder Marsh Rummel; Rep. Chris Taylor; Sen. Mark Miller