

## ***TCEQ supports Crystal City decision to lift boil water notice***

On Feb. 18, TCEQ received a complaint from a Crystal City resident about discolored water. After investigating the situation, and despite the fact that the safety of the drinking water is primarily the city's responsibility, out of an abundance of caution the state decided on Friday, Feb. 19 that more data was needed before the water could be declared safe to drink.

Early Monday, Feb. 22, the TCEQ collected a large number of water samples from numerous locations around the city to support a full suite review of the water for compliance with state and federal drinking water standards. TCEQ had the samples hand delivered to the Department of State Health Services laboratory in Austin to make sure the analysis took place as quickly as possible.

Today, Feb. 24, after analyzing numerous sampling results, the TCEQ believes it has enough reinforcing data to support Crystal City's earlier recommendation to lift the boil water notice. The reason for having a boil water notice is to protect public health by ensuring that no harmful bacteria and other microbes are present in the public's drinking water.

Water pressure and chlorine residual levels representative of the distribution system meets drinking water standards which prevent harmful bacteria and other microbes. Other constituents such as lead, copper, nitrate and nitrite, and volatile organics were also at acceptable levels for protection of public health. TCEQ will continue to receive additional results over the next several weeks.

TCEQ's investigation is ongoing but at this time we feel that the city's tank maintenance was the cause of the color and odor issues in the water. Manganese settled out into the elevated storage tank as sediment and was released into the city's distribution system on Feb. 17. Manganese and iron can cause taste, odor, black water and/or a reddish brown water color and is aesthetic in nature. Neither of these constituents present potential health hazards and EPA has not set federal drinking water standards for these constituents.

If residents notice their water is unusually discolored or has an unusual odor, they are urged to contact the city at 830-374-3477 or the TCEQ regional office in Laredo at 956-791-6611.

To help support the city's efforts to protect its citizens, the TCEQ has delivered two truckloads of drinking water for distribution, more than 80,000 bottles.

Zavala County Judge Joe Luna expressed support for the city and the TCEQ, and said "This is a good example of the state and local government working together, in difficult circumstances, to ensure the people of Crystal City have drinking water that is protective of public health."

TCEQ will continue to work with the county and city over the next few weeks and months to ensure that the system continues to operate within state and federal drinking water standards.