



COUNTY OF ST. CLAIR

OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



PRESS RELEASE For Immediate Release

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St. Clair County Finds an Economical Way to Ensure Clean Drinking Water for its Citizens

The Port Huron to Erie Drinking Water Monitoring System (DWMS) which started in 2006 is a high tech series of equipment designed to measure the quality of water entering each water treatment plant on an almost continuous basis. The collected water data then determines the need for specialized treatment options, consumption advisories, and even the need to shut down the water plant's intake system.

The initial cost of the project was approximately \$2.5 million and was funded by the EPA, the US Department of Homeland Security, the State of Michigan, St. Clair County, Macomb County, and the communities that own the drinking water intakes. Additional lump sum grants were provided by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. This initial funding was essential to purchase and install the monitoring equipment and bring the network into operational status; however no permanent funding source for the continued operation was able to be secured.

This summer it became apparent that the system would be shut down by the end of the year due to lack of permanent funding. That prompted officials from the St. Clair County Health Department to initiate discussions with Macomb County in an attempt to maintain, at the very least, a modified version of the system in the St. Clair and Macomb County region.

There have been several meetings and discussions over the past several weeks including all interested parties such as Macomb County, SEMCOG, MDEQ, and the individual water plant operators. The culmination of these efforts has resulted in a plan that would allow a modified DWMS to remain in operation over a smaller region (Port Huron to Mt. Clemens) for at least the next year. That additional year will allow time for St. Clair County and Macomb Officials to collaborate with the local water plant operators and community leaders to establish a permanently funded DWMS. In order for the plan to succeed, each individual water plant would have to assume the operation & maintenance costs of the equipment in their plants and St. Clair and Macomb Counties will each need to provide \$50,000 in funding for the system. Chairperson Bohm will be requesting approval for funding at the St. Clair County Board of Commissioners' Environmental/Public Works Committee meeting on October 5, 2011.

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