



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

REGION 2  
290 BROADWAY  
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

MAY 19 2011

Dr. Carmine F. Vasile  
60 Herbert Circle  
Patchogue, NY 11772

Dear Dr. Vasile:

This letter is in response to your concerns regarding the Suffolk County Water Authority's compliance with the Radionuclides Rule and SCWA's practice of blending source water to achieve compliance with Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) in drinking water.

As you know, New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) administers the Public Water Supply Supervision Program in the State of New York pursuant to Section 1413 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). Like many other states, New York delegates SDWA implementation to the local health units, in this case the Suffolk County Department of Health Services. In response to your concerns, EPA has undertaken its own investigation of the alleged violations by performing an extensive review of the data you provided as well as an audit of SCWA compliance records.

Radionuclides in drinking water, specifically gross alpha, Radium-226/228, and beta/photon emitters, have been federally regulated since 1976. Subsequent revisions to these regulations were incorporated into the Radionuclides Rule, enacted on December 7, 2000, the federal standard under which radionuclides are regulated to this day. To summarize, the Radionuclides Rule retained previous MCLs for Combined Radium-226/228, gross alpha, and beta/photon emitters, and set an MCL of 30 ug/L for uranium. It also established revised monitoring requirements for radionuclides in drinking water, standardizing the monitoring framework in addition to requiring entry point to the distribution system (EPTDS) monitoring.

Please be advised that the Radionuclides Rule applies to Community Water Systems only. Monitoring wells, such as the ones you reference at Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL), are not subject to these federal requirements. Please note also that the Radionuclides Rule does not set specific MCLs for Strontium-89, Strontium-90 or Lead-210 but rather an aggregate MCL for beta/photon emitters.

A search of the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS), which can be accessed at <http://www.epa.gov/enviro/facts/sdwis/>, shows one Radionuclides Rule violation for SCWA. The violation report (attached) indicates that during the 2008 calendar year, SCWA failed to take some of its required samples for Radium-228. As you can see, a Notice of Violation was issued to SCWA on April 13, 2009 and the required additional samples had been taken as of July 5, 2010.

Additionally, a hydrogeologic evaluation was conducted by CDM in 1998 to assess the vulnerability of SCWA wellfields to potential contamination originating from the BNL property. The groundwater flow model demonstrated that the Lambert Avenue wellfield is the only SCWA wellfield that could potentially be affected by contaminants migrating from the BNL site. As a precautionary measure, SCWA maintains a network of monitoring wells at intermediary locations between the BNL site and SCWA wellfields. These monitoring wells are sampled quarterly and analyzed for a variety of parameters, including radionuclides.

You also expressed concern regarding SCWA's practice of blending water from different sources to achieve MCL compliance. Under New York State Sanitary Code, Part 5, the blending of a source that exceeds drinking water standards with another source is permitted, subject to the operational and monitoring conditions outlined in Environmental Health Manual Item No. WSP 68 TR. EPA has reviewed the conditions of New York State's blending policy, and is not aware of any violation of its conditions on the part of SCWA.

I thank you for your inquiry, and trust that the above addresses your concerns. Please be advised that EPA, NYSDOH and SCDHS are committed to working together to ensure compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act and its implementing regulations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DMcKenna', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Douglas McKenna, Chief  
Water Compliance Branch

Enclosure

cc: Walter Dawydiak, SCDHS  
Roger C. Sokol, NYSDOH  
Anna Stamm, NYSDOH

St Formal NOV issued	NOV-13-2002
St Compliance achieved	NOV-06-2002

**Monitoring and Reporting and Other Violations:** system failed to complete all samples or sample in a timely manner, or had another non-health-based violation. A significant monitoring violation means the system failed to take a large percentage of the required samples. Non-significant monitoring violations indicate that the water system failed to take some of the required samples, but did do some of the required sampling.

Type of Violation	Sampling Period: Begin Date	Sampling Period End Date	Contaminant	Violation ID
Monitoring, Regular	JAN-01-2008	DEC-31-2008	Radium-228	509

Follow-up Action	Date of Response
St Compliance achieved	JUL-05-2010
St Formal NOV issued	APR-13-2009
St Public Notif requested	APR-13-2009

***For more information on:***

**Violations more than 10 years back:** Ask the operators of your water system, contact your state or file a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.

**Watersheds (the land areas drinking water comes from):** Learn more about the health of this watershed.

**Drinking water in your state:** <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/dwinfo/ny.htm>

**Drinking water in general:** Visit EPA's Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water web site or call the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791). EPA has also prepared fact sheets about various regulated drinking water contaminants.

**Advanced tools for accessing EPA drinking water data:** <http://water.epa.gov/scitech/datait/databases/drink/index.cfm>

**Research Data:** As well as monitoring the levels of drinking water contaminants for which EPA has set standards, EPA, states, and water systems also carry out studies of contaminants that may need to be regulated in the future. For more information about these, please see the National Contaminant Occurrence Database and the Microbe and Disinfection Byproducts study database.

**Additional Information**

In fiscal year 2005 (the last year for which EPA has complete data) based on information reported to EPA by the states, 1.5 percent of all systems reported a treatment technique

http://oaspub.epa.gov/enviro/sdw\_report\_v2.first\_table?pws\_id=NY5110526&state=NY&source=Groundwater&population=1100000&sys\_num=0



**Envirofacts Search**

SDWIS



SDWIS Violation Report

<< Return

**SUFFOLK COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY**  
 HAUPPAUGE, NY 11788  
 631-563-0259

Primary Water Source Type	Population Served
Groundwater	1100000

**Other Links**

- [Overview](#)
- [Search](#)
- [Model](#)
- [Law](#)
- [SDWIS Search User Guide](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water](#)

[Report an Error](#)

This report was created on MAY-19-2011  
 Results are based on data extracted on APR-14-2011

**NOTICE:** EPA is aware of inaccuracies and underreporting of some data in the Safe Drinking Water Information System. We are working with the states to improve the quality of the data.

The tables below list all violations that the state reported to EPA for this water system. Health-based violations are listed first, followed by monitoring, reporting, and other violations.

**Health Based Violations:** amount of contaminant exceeded safety standard (MCL) or water was not treated properly.

Type of Violation	Occurred Between: Begin Date	Occurred Between: End Date	Contaminant	Analytical Result	Violation ID
MCL, Monthly (TCR)	SEP-01-2006	SEP-30-2006	Coliform (TCR)	—	407

Follow-up Action	Date of Response
St Formal NOV issued	DEC-18-2006
St Public Notif issued	DEC-18-2006
St Compliance achieved	DEC-18-2006
St Public Notif received	DEC-18-2006
St Public Notif requested	DEC-18-2006

Type of Violation	Occurred Between: Begin Date	Occurred Between: End Date	Contaminant	Analytical Result	Violation ID
MCL, Average	JAN-01-2002	DEC-31-2002	Nitrate	11.11	103

Follow-up Action	Date of Response
St Public Notif received	FEB-11-2003
St No addtl Formal Action needed	FEB-11-2003
St Public Notif requested	FEB-11-2003
St Formal NOV issued	NOV-13-2002

St Formal NOV issued	NOV-13-2002
St Compliance achieved	NOV-06-2002

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Last updated on Thursday, May 19, 2011