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January 24, 2017

Mike Stuhr, PE, Administrator
Portland Water Bureau
1120 SW 5th Street, Rm 600
Portland, OR 97204-1926

Dear Mr. Stuhr:

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) has received your Interim Lead Reduction Plan dated December 2, 2016. You provided this plan in response to our requirement for immediate interim measures in our November 4, 2016 letter approving your schedule to improve corrosion control to reduce lead at Portland Water Bureau customer taps. We have since reviewed your plan with careful consideration, assuring that the strongest public health protections are in place by reducing lead levels at the tap in both the short- and long-term.

OHA approves the action items proposed in your interim plan. These interim measures reflect best management practices to reduce lead at taps with the infrastructure currently available. Specifically, we approve raising the pH at the entry point to the distribution system from the current target of 8.0, to 8.2, as recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency. We understand the Portland Water Bureau will raise the pH to 8.1 within two weeks, and up to 8.2 after the spring 2017 lead and copper tap sample results are analyzed. OHA will establish minimum regulatory pH values based on lead levels found in the spring 2017 sampling. Future adjustments to the regulatory minimum may be necessary.

Your interim plan also included a schedule update because the Portland Water Bureau announced that it intends to begin the Corrosion Control Study earlier than originally anticipated. Other schedule modifications may be appropriate. OHA will address official schedule modifications in a subsequent letter.

We look forward to receiving quarterly status reports and updates to the lead hazard reduction plan in addition to these interim action items. Thank you for your cooperation in this important public health matter.

Sincerely,

Jere High, ND, Administrator
Center for Health Protection
OHA Public Health Division

cc: Marie Jennings, Region 10 Environmental Protection Agency
Dan Opalski, Region 10 Environmental Protection Agency