



# CITY OF LA VERNE CITY HALL

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## PRESS RELEASE

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Date: November 17, 2016

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### Notice Regarding the Tentative Ruling on the City of Claremont's Action to Acquire Golden State Water's Operations

**On November 10, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Fruin issued his tentative ruling on the City of Claremont's action to acquire Golden State Water's operations in the City of Claremont. Although the City of La Verne was not a party to this proceeding, we have agreed to assist the City of Claremont by operating the water system if they are successful in acquiring it. During the trial, Golden State Water challenged the ability of La Verne to operate the Claremont water system. We feel it is necessary that our residents and customers be aware of the following facts:**

*Judge Fruin's tentative decision unfortunately does not reflect a complete picture of La Verne's water operations. While La Verne did indeed experience some water quality concerns in the past, they were responded to immediately and to the complete satisfaction of state health department regulators.*

*Golden State Water Company's assertion and Judge Fruin's agreement that La Verne households built before 1986 were exposed to elevated lead levels between August 31, 2006 and June 24, 2013 is exaggerated and not supported by the facts. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) received La Verne's reports during these years and only in 2012 did the CDPH find La Verne to be out of compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule. Further, the ruling notes all residences built before 1986 were impacted, yet the sample pool for the Lead and Copper Rule specifically requires testing only on residences served by lead service lines or constructed with copper pipes and lead solder after 1982, but before 1986, therefore, not all residences built before 1986 could have been affected. No lead service lines are in use in La Verne.*

*Judge Fruin noted in his decision that "La Verne is not as qualified as Golden State to maintain the safety and reliability of water provided in the Claremont service area." The Judge supports this conclusion, as stated in the tentative ruling, "the City (of Claremont) did not at trial offer evidence to explain La Verne's errors in testing and reporting lead exceedances and the E. coli episode in La Verne's drinking water nor any practices that La Verne has put in place to avoid such mishaps in the future." In fact, La Verne staff*

*testified in detail about the incidents and measures taken by the City of La Verne to remedy the situation.*

*The fact is the City of La Verne has undertaken a number of water system improvements to further enhance our water quality and reliability. La Verne has conducted an extensive evaluation of its water system operations and water quality and such efforts remain ongoing. Based upon these evaluations, La Verne has taken a number of steps to improve water quality including the addition of corrosion control and enhanced disinfection systems, blending mixers within our reservoirs, revised operating procedures to reduce water age throughout the system, and increased sampling and monitoring for specific water quality characteristics related to nitrification and pH control. We are also instituting additional review of our annual Consumer Confidence Reports to improve minor reporting inaccuracies contained in previous issues.*

*We want our customers to rest assured that the City of La Verne is committed to providing the best water quality and most consistent service reliability. If our customers have any questions about their water quality, please contact the customer service division at 909-596-8744.*

*Although Golden State Water Company brought forward two water quality issues during trial, the City's response to each issue were not addressed in the Judge's ruling. Following are the details of each and the specific actions taken by the City:*

#### *2011 E. Coli Issue*

*In September 2011, routine bacteriological testing confirmed the presence of E. coli bacteria in the City's Zone 5 pressure zone affecting 180 residences. A positive sample for E. coli in drinking water indicates the potential presence of other pathogens and represents a significant health risk. In response, the City took immediate action to increase disinfection levels within the Marshall Canyon reservoir and affected distribution pipelines. This effort, coupled with pipeline flushing, cured the issue and the full system was back on line within two days. Concurrent inspections found no human or animal intrusion into the water infrastructure.*

*Our subsequent evaluation determined the issue spawned from a nitrification episode within the Zone 5 pressure zone; however, no specific source was determined for the E. coli bacteria. Nitrification degrades the disinfection residuals within the system and can lead to bacteriological contamination. The city has since developed a nitrification monitoring plan, prepared by Malcolm Pirnie/Arcadis Consultants, which is used by staff to monitor the signs and indicators of a nitrification occurrence. This plan also includes measures to mitigate conditions should the onset of a nitrification episode be noted.*

*Additionally, a Residual Control Disinfection System was installed at the Plateau Reservoir #2 to keep the chloramine levels high and stable within the upper zones of the water distribution system. This includes Marshal Canyon Reservoir. An anhydrous ammonia feed has been added as well to the disinfection system at the Amherst Treatment plant and is designed to match the chlorine to ammonia ratio (chloramine) that is being provided in waters received from the Three Valleys Municipal Water District (TVMWD).*

#### *Lead and Copper Exceedance*

*Initial testing results for lead and copper in 2006 and 2009 demonstrated elevated levels of lead in a number of samples. However, specific instructions must be followed to obtain a valid sample*

*and our follow up review uncovered a variety of sampling errors. These sample results were invalidated with the approval of local health regulators and repeat samples were obtained. Ultimately, the lead and copper results for 2006 and 2009 were both found to be within limits and compliant.*

*Testing for lead and copper in July 2012 revealed lead levels exceeded the action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb) at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile sample resulting in a notice from the CDPH. This exceedance triggered a number of actions by the City including preparation of a corrosion control study. The study, which was performed by Hazen Sawyer Consulting, evaluated the city's water quality parameters typically associated with lead leaching. The evaluation concluded that nitrification was likely exacerbating already low pH values in groundwaters pumped from the Live Oak Basin resulting in slightly corrosive water.*

*In response to these findings, the City increased the type and frequency of water samples collected throughout the distribution system. This enhanced monitoring is specific to managing pH changes in the water. An automatic analyzer has also been installed at the Amherst Treatment plant to monitor pH values of water leaving the plant, which treats groundwater pumped from the Live Oak basin. Treated water from the Amherst plant is also blended with less aggressive imported water from TVMWD to increase the pH. In addition to the aforementioned, a Poly/Ortho Phosphate chemical feed was recently added to the Fifth and White facility, which will increase pH levels from the White Avenue treatment facility.*