Water authority faced three TECQ violations

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18 hrs ago

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality issued three violations to the Canyon Regional Water Authority in recent months related to drinking water treated at the Lake Dunlap Water Treatment Plant, officials said.

The water authority has since corrected the issues that led to the violations and advised customers of what happened, said David Davenport, Canyon Regional Water Authority general manager.

“Most everything happened back in November, December and January. It takes that long through the process to get to the notice and to TCEQ,” he said. “The Dunlap plant is where these violations occurred.”

The water authority contacted the TCEQ April 10 to alert the report data difficulties at the surface water treatment plant, said Martha Otero with the commission’s media relations department. TCEQ then worked with the water system to determine what happened with Canyon Regional’s monitoring mechanisms, which had functioned improperly from November through March.

The TCEQ issued notices to Canyon Regional Water Authority in May regarding Safe Water Treatment Rule violations, Otero said.

“The system was required to issue public notice for the SWTR (Safe Water Treatment Rule) treatment technique violations no later than June 16, 2019, and no later than May 17, 2020, for the SWTR monitoring/reporting violations,” she said. “The system issued public notice for both the treatment technique and monitoring/reporting violations on June 15, 2019.”

Canyon Regional Water Authority also sent out notices regarding a third violation dealing with an increased presence of bromate found in its water during a three-month period in 2019. Those notices went out June 26, Otero said.

She said bromate is formed when the ozone used to treat drinking water interacts with bromide that is naturally found in some source waters. Some people who drink too much water containing bromate over many years may have an increased risk of cancer diagnoses.

It is mandatory for public notices for health-based violations to advise customers to talk with their doctor if they have concerns or to get more information about health-related effects, Otero said.

“When public water systems have these types of violations, they have the potential to impact human health and are required to notify the public,” she said. “Public notices must provide language to customers concerning the potential health impacts. Inadequately treated water may contain bacteria, viruses, and parasites that can cause symptoms such as nausea, cramps, diarrhea and associated headaches.”

The amount of bromate levels in Canyon Regional Water Authority’s water was at acceptable levels, but the water system changed the way it treats its water to reduce those levels even further, Davenport said.

With the other violation, a membrane within the filters was not being monitored properly due to a software error, he said. The water supplier has since replaced the software, which is now doing its job properly, and water samples have and continue to be safe, Davenport said.

Canyon Regional Water Authority is a water wholesaler, of sorts. It provides water supply to water providers like Crystal Clear, Springs Hill, Marion, Cibolo, Green Valley, La Vernia and the San Antonio Water System, Davenport said.

Canyon Regional notified the suppliers of the issues and the suppliers delivered the notices to its customers that would have received water during the times the violations occurred, he said. The issues have been addressed and customers need not find another water supplier or anything like that, Davenport said.

The violations did not meet TCEQ’s criteria for formal enforcement action, Otero said, and the water system has returned to compliance.

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