

Here is the latest information regarding the very unpleasant smell coming from some resident's tap water.

Water specialists from the state's Department of Environmental Protection, the DEP, have confirmed our initial finding that the odor is the result of naturally-occurring algae bloom on Winona Pond, which is a prominent source of Peabody's water supply in the western part of the city.

DEP drinking water experts have reviewed our internal water test results for the past several weeks. These are the daily and weekly tests performed by our water engineers and reported to the state and federal government. According to the DEP, these test results have met and continue to meet the strongest state and federal requirements for our drinking water.

To provide further assurance to our residents, the DEP and I authorized an additional battery of tests to be conducted at an independent certified laboratory in Indiana. This analysis tested for cyanotoxins and bacteria that can lead to health issues. These results were delivered to me today and immediately reviewed by DEP and local water specialists. I am pleased to report the results came back negative for cyanotoxins and bacteria and confirmed our previous results. Therefore, I can once again assure Peabody residents that our water meets the strongest state and federal standards for drinking, cooking, bathing and all other uses.

While our water meets these standards, the odor many of us have been living with is simply unacceptable. Both as Mayor and as a father of four – including an infant son, I share your concerns and frustration. I am experiencing this smell in my home and although I have noticed improvement in the last few days, the smelly water is a nuisance that comes at the end of what has been a very long and difficult New England winter.

Thus far with the DEP's assistance, we have taken the following steps to solve the problem:

Our water technicians executed a system-wide flush designed to cycle out smelly water. The flush involved draining storage tanks and refilling them with fresh water as well as flushing hundreds of fire hydrants throughout the city. This process will continue.

In addition, the DEP has approved a more aggressive treatment program. Beginning this week, our water will be treated with a DEP-approved permanganate oxidant designed to eliminate the smell quickly and safely.

DEP and independent water specialists believe this new treatment protocol and continued flushing of our water system will eliminate the odor in relatively short order – although we ask for your continued patience as these measures begin to take hold.

I will continue to provide regular updates until the odor is gone. I appreciate your continued patience and your continued feedback. Thank you.