City of Monticello Water Treatment Plant Bond Request

Thank you for the opportunity to provide supplemental information about the City of Monticello's request for funding through the State of MN Bonding Bill to facilitate the construction of a water treatment plant. The proposed facility is valuable infrastructure for providing safe, reliable drinking water to the public. The City intends to invest local funds in the construction and operation of the plant, but at an estimated cost of $28 million, the cost is an impediment to initiating the project. We are requesting $22 million in bond funds to ensure its timely construction.

Monticello recently completed a feasibility study to determine the cost and location of a water treatment plant after Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) testing of Monticello's raw water indicated high levels of manganese. Manganese intake is essential for healthy bodies, but too much can be harmful. Children and adults who drink water containing high levels of manganese may have problems with memory, attention, and motor skills. Infants drinking formula prepared in water containing high levels of manganese may develop learning or behavior issues. According to MDH safe manganese levels in water used to prepare formula to feed infants are 100ug/L or less. For anyone 1yr or older a safe level of manganese in water are 300 ug/L.

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) tested Monticello's raw water manganese levels as part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Fourth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR). This testing revealed that all five of the City's municipal wells significantly exceeded the maximum recommended manganese level for infants (babies under the age of one), and four wells exceed the maximum recommended manganese level for children and adults. Four of the five wells have manganese levels nearly seven times above the levels recommended for infants with the remaining well having levels four times above the recommended infant level.

The City of Monticello is currently served by 5 deep wells pumping directly into the distribution system with no further treatment or removal of contaminants. Monticello's wells have been found to have manganese levels well above what MDH has considered to be a "safe" level of 300 ug/L. The study that was performed on Monticello's water had found levels of manganese ranging from the lowest at 435 ug/L to the highest at 810 ug/L giving us a system average of 685 ug/L.

Currently, the options available to treat municipal water require homeowners to take steps on their own. However, we believe it is our responsibility to build a facility to treat the water equitably for the public. Monticello has many low-income based and multi-family housing units within the city. Many of them are home to new or growing families. It's tough to think about the fact that these families may not have the funds available to purchase bottled water or have access to treated water to prepare food for their young families or prepare formula for their infants. Infants and young children need every chance they can get during development.

According to a MDH estimate, 3 percent of Minnesotans on community public water systems receive water above 300 ug/L. Monticello currently falls within that 3 percent. With your help we can take the steps necessary for our community to be a part of the other 90 percent of Minnesotans receiving safe drinking water with manganese levels well below 100 ug/L.

In addition to manganese, the City's groundwater also has elevated levels of iron. Iron is not known to have adverse effects on human health, but it can cause operational issues within the water system and reduce hydrant flow rates that are critical for fire protection.

We appreciate the consideration you all are giving this important project to ensure that we are providing safe drinking water to our residents.

Resources:

Manganese in drinking Water

https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/contaminants/mangnsefctsht.pdf

EPA

https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/secondary-drinking-water-standards-guidance-nuisance-chemicals
https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2017-03/documents/ucmr4-fact-sheet-general.pdf