

## Interim Water Topics Overview Committee

My name is Duane Wadeson, my farmstead is located about 6 ½ miles southwest of Leonard, North Dakota. My health problems began in December 2014 and included high fever, hair loss, loss of taste and smell and nausea. I was tested for many diseases and cancers for the next 80 days. Everything came back negative, except for abnormal cells in the lungs and stomach. I spent 10's of thousands of dollars on appointments, 50 doctors' appointments and body scans. At the end of February 2015 I was finally tested for poisoning. At that point I tested positive for arsenic. Doctors in Fargo and at University of Minnesota both said it was the highest body arsenic numbers ever recorded in a living person, 61 parts per billion. I was instructed by the doctors to abandon my farm and move somewhere there was good water. I did so on March 1, 2015 and have not permanently returned to my home since.

I called the State Department of Health and spoke with Bill Suess, from North Dakota Groundwater Protection Program, Division of Water Quality. I have also been working with Naomi Muscha, State Representative from Enderlin, to draft a bill to put in a warning system of some sort so this sort of thing does not happen again. When a monitoring well becomes contaminated people in that area should be notified. The Health Department tested and looked for other sources of arsenic, took soil samples from the yard and garden, and tested everything in my house, no other sources were found. Rural water lines run two miles away from my farm, estimated cost to pipe it in was approximately \$57,000.

Ransom County officials came to my farm and classified it as uninhabitable to unsellable and dropped the taxable value to \$5,000. I worked for Case IH Factory in Fargo for 41 years, made payments on my home for 30 years and now it is worth nothing without a good water source. In addition I have had body scans every three to six months to monitor the abnormal cells from arsenic poisoning. Our dentist asked us what my wife and I had changed about 10 years ago because we both began to lose teeth. We said nothing, our dentist now says it was the arsenic that killed our teeth, beginning 10 years ago.

All this time there was a state monitoring well that I can see from my kitchen window and another one two miles south of my house. I was told by a Health Department official the arsenic numbers on these wells has been 85 and 93 parts per billion for at least 10 years. Nobody has ever warned any of us about the arsenic levels in these observation wells. Since all this has happened I have been working with Cass Rural Water, my neighbors and the town of Leonard. Many of the wells in the area tested very high for arsenic. The numbers range from 14 to 127 parts per billion, most are in the 40 to 85 range, which is four to eight and half times the recommended levels with one a whopping 12.7 times over.

Cass Rural Water District has conducted several public meetings in Leonard and made application to the North Dakota State Water Commission for funding for a project to extend water service to the homes in Leonard as well as 35 rural residents in the surrounding townships. There are nearly 100 residents signed up for a project to bring in Cass Rural Water. In the meantime many people are buying all their drinking water. Just in the town of Leonard there are

approximately 50 children exposed to this water. There are many people in this area with health issues, which doctors say the arsenic may have contributed to. Even the water that is low in arsenic has other minerals in it and is very poor quality.

We are thankful that this project has been recommended by the State Water Commission staff for funding through the federal Municipal Rural and Industrial program. It is on the agenda for approval at the March 9th State Water Commission Meeting as well as the March 10th Garrison Conservancy District Meeting.

In closing I want to ask for the support of the interim committee members on a bill to put in place a warning system that would require the appropriate state agencies to notify land owners who are located near observation wells that test positive for contamination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Duane Wadson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Duane Wadson

Leonard, ND