



State of Louisiana
Department of Health and Hospitals
Office of Public Health

August 12, 2013

Dear Colleagues:

As you know, the Louisiana Legislature passed ACT 292 directing the Department of Health and Hospitals to create the Louisiana Standards for Water Works Construction, Operation, and Maintenance Committee that would develop a set of standards for the design, construction and maintenance of our state's water systems.

You are an integral part of protecting the health of our state's residents and we are eager to begin this process to build a stronger, more protective framework for safe drinking water with you. Our committee includes stakeholders, engineering experts, public health experts, consumer advocates and water system owners and operators. We have scheduled our first meeting for August 21, 2013, with monthly meetings to follow until September 2014. At that point, the Department will propose final rules based on the committee's deliberations. We hope you will be able to join us as your schedule allows. If you are not able to join, you will be able to access information and updates via a web page we have developed to keep everyone updated on the latest developments. **The address is www.dhh.la.gov/watercommittee.**

Since the Committee will be developing new standards to take effect after the conclusion of its work in 2014, we also know that until that time, our office will also need to take a different approach to how we conduct plan reviews and compliance surveys today, while still maintaining our role of protecting public health as mandated by state statute and federal law. We cannot continue business as usual. We know many of you have not only voiced your own local concerns about alterations in state policy, but for federal mandates and their impact as well. We are sensitive to that and are pleased to be launching an effort to improve our standards, but most critically, usher in a new way the Office of Public Health can offer more assistance to systems and be more responsive to local governments and businesses—one thing we fully support and know our staff are behind.

As a first step to take some action on our business-as-usual approach, we are fine-tuning an interim process to how we will do business as the Safe Drinking Water program during the time the Committee is doing its work. We must continue plan reviews and surveys to avoid holding up projects, but we also fully understand

we must conduct our work differently starting today. **We have conducted a thorough internal review and are developing an interim solution to water system requirements and streamlining the survey and compliance process that we can use for the next year, until the Committee and Department takes final action in late 2014. To ensure this will be helpful to everyone over the next year, we plan on presenting this to the Committee at the August 21 meeting for their feedback, followed by immediate implementation with our staff.** Finally, once the Committee's final work and rulemaking are complete in late 2014, we will then fully implement our new agreed upon standards across the state.

Act 292 laid out specific membership of the committee. The following individuals have been named by the committee and followed by the organization that appointed them, as directed by the Legislature.

- Dirk Barrios, for the Louisiana Public Water Suppliers, Southwest Section, American Water Works Association
- Mayor Vern Breland, for the Louisiana Municipal Association
- Ben Bridges, for the Louisiana Public Water Suppliers, Southwest Section, American Water Works Association
- Robert Brou, for the Louisiana Rural Water Association
- Jeffrey Duplantis, P.E., for the Louisiana Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers
- Greg Gordan, for the Louisiana Police Jury Association
- Jimmy Guidry, M.D., for the Office of Public Health
- Jimmy Hagan, P.E., for the Louisiana Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers
- P.R. "Randy" Hollis, P.E., for the Louisiana Municipal Association
- Patrick Kerr, for the Louisiana Public Water Suppliers, National Association of Water Companies
- J.T. Lane, for the Office of Public Health
- Rick Nowlin, for the Louisiana Policy Jury Association
- William "Rusty" Reeves, for the Louisiana Rural Water Association
- Chris Richard, P.E., for the Louisiana Engineering Society
- Keith Shackelford, P.E., for the Louisiana Engineering Society
- Cheryl Slavant, for the Louisiana Environmental Action Network
- Delos Williams, for the Louisiana Public Water Suppliers

Our first meeting is scheduled for August 21, 2013, from 1 to 4 p.m. in conference room 118 in the Bienville Building, 628 North Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Monthly meetings will follow until September 2014. At the first meeting, we plan to discuss future meeting dates and preferences, information needs, role of the committee and other topics.

All meetings will follow Louisiana open meetings laws and requirements. In addition, as directed by Act 292, all future meetings will also be held in Baton Rouge at the Bienville Building. If you should have any questions, comments or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at jtlane@la.gov or jake.causey@la.gov or Sheree Taillon, who will be coordinating the committee's work, at sheree.taillon@la.gov or 225/342-6188.

We look forward to working with you and paving a new and improved path for a healthier, better protected Louisiana. We have heard your concerns and voices, and we are fully committed to working with you to take our standards and service to an even higher level for the residents of our state. On this, you have our full commitment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

J.T. Lane
Assistant Secretary

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jake Causey" in a cursive style.

Jake Causey
Chief Engineer