

Flint's water getting cleaner—but not yet safe

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New tests show water quality improving in Flint, the Midwestern US city hit by a massive lead contamination scandal, officials said Wednesday, but it is not yet cleared of the toxin.

It has been more than two years since lead from aging pipes first began to leach into the [drinking water](#) of the hard-scrabble city, when officials switched the water source to a more corrosive one as a cost saving effort.

Michigan Governor Rick Snyder told a press conference that 95 percent of recent tests of the most problematic areas showed lead levels considered safe under federal guidelines. But he stopped short of declaring Flint's water safe to drink without lead filters, and would not offer a timeline of when it would be.

"Frankly, without filters, I don't think anyone in the US should trust water from a lead pipe," said Marc Edwards, a professor of environmental engineering at Virginia Tech university, who is assisting Michigan with the Flint response.

"This is a national lesson that we are learning and we have to think about," he said.

Snyder on Wednesday urged [federal lawmakers](#) to send long-delayed aid money to the embattled city.

"I highly encourage the [federal government](#) to move forward and to get the aid done for Flint," said the Republican governor.

Aid for the city has become a major bone of contention as the US Congress wrangles over a federal government funding bill, with lawmakers scrambling to stave off a shutdown at week's end.

Lawmakers settled on a compromise Wednesday, that would allocate \$170 million for infrastructure funds for cities with water contamination.

State officials want to replace all the lead pipes in Flint and in Michigan, but that process could take years. City residents have complained about the slow pace of the recovery, and filed several lawsuits.

Officials in Michigan had initially denied that there was a problem with Flint's water. Those denials led to a criminal investigation, and charges against nine current and former state employees.

For its part, the state has sued two consulting firms—a French and a Texas company —accusing them of negligence and fraud. Veolia North America and Lockwood, Andrews & Newnam of Texas have responded by saying their suggestions and concerns were ignored by the state.

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