



LONG BEACH WATER DEPARTMENT

The Standard in Water Conservation &
Environmental Stewardship

MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release
Friday, March 7, 2008

Contact: Ryan J. Alsop
562) 570-2314
(562) 277-3497
Ryan_alsop@lbwater.org

Statement from Kevin L. Wattier, General Manager of the Long Beach Water Department, concerning an expected Associated Press (AP) news story on pharmaceuticals in the nation's drinking water supply.

The Associated Press (AP) will begin running a three-part story on pharmaceutical products in the nation's drinking water supplies. This story will run in most of the nation's largest media outlets next week, on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. We have learned that the story will specifically list "Long Beach, CA" as testing positive for two specific trace pharmaceutical products: Mebprobamatem, an anti-anxiety medication and Phenytoin, an anti-epileptic medication. Also named in the story, as testing positive for pharmaceutical products, are Los Angeles, Orange County and San Diego, among several other large metropolitan cities throughout the United States.

We have learned that the source of this information is a study conducted in 2006 by the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) of Southern California. The two pharmaceutical compounds attributed to Long Beach were actually sampled at one of MWD's water treatment plants located in the San Fernando Valley, which we sometimes get a portion of our water from. We currently do not receive any water from that treatment plant. While we have never sampled for these two particular pharmaceutical compounds, we did participate with the United States Geological Service in a study conducted in 2006 in which three of our wells were sampled. In this study **NO PHARMACEUTICAL COMPOUNDS WERE DETECTED.**

To put this situation into proper context, the MWD has calculated that you would have to drink 120 Olympic-size pools of water per day to get the recommended dose of the pharmaceutical compounds that were detected at their treatment plant. Nonetheless, the ability to detect these compounds is rapidly evolving, as the instrumentation to do so improves.

While no Federal or State drinking water standards/regulations, or any conclusive water quality control parameters, exist for any of these emerging pharmaceutical compounds, the Long Beach Water Department is continuing to closely monitor and manage this and other evolving water quality issues to the best of our ability.

###

