

E. COLI EFMS

Chris Savage (Eclectablog) continues to track what the Emergency Financial Managers have been doing around Michigan. In new developments, the EFM for Pontiac MI, Michael Stampfler, broke the Police Dispatcher's union contract, dissolved the Planning Commission, fired the water and wastewater department, and outsourced the latter function to a private company, United Water Services.

Now, Pontiac has had compliance problems with its wastewater treatment since 2009. Which is why Stampfler's chosen replacement for Pontiac's wastewater department is troublesome. As Savage points out, United Water was indicted in December for tampering with E Coli testing in Gary, IN.

Because United Water was indicted by the U.S. Department of Justice last December for violating the Clean Water Act.

United Water Services Inc., the former contract operator of the Gary Sanitary District wastewater treatment works in Gary, Ind., and two of its employees, were charged today with conspiracy and felony violations of the Clean Water Act in a 26-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury, the Justice Department announced today.

United Water Services Inc., and employees Dwain L. Bowie, and Gregory A. Ciaccio, have been charged with manipulating daily wastewater sampling methods by turning up disinfectant treatment levels shortly before sampling, then turning them down shortly after sampling.

~SNIP~

According to the indictment, the

defendants conspired to tamper with *E. coli* monitoring methods by turning up levels of disinfectant dosing prior to *E. coli* sampling. The indictment states that the defendants would avoid taking *E. coli* samples until disinfectants had reached elevated levels, which in turn were expected to lead to reduced *E. coli* levels. Immediately after sampling, the indictment alleges, the defendants turned down disinfectant levels, thus reducing the amount of treatment chemicals they used.

That would be a neat way to save money on wastewater treatment, huh? To hire a company allegedly willing to tamper with water quality readings to appear to have fixed water treatment problems.

Of course, the cost of infecting a city with *E. Coli* might end up being a bigger problem.