



January 15, 2016

NOTICE TO PRIVATE WELL HOMEOWNERS **Area-wide Boil Water Advisory has been Removed**

Dear Homeowner:

As of January 2016, the province will no longer be reporting boil water advisories on private well communities. Experience gained since these advisories were issued suggests they are not an effective tool for communicating the variable risks associated with privately owned wells.

In 2001, a boil water advisory was issued to the community of East Selkirk after water quality testing found a number of wells throughout the community with high levels of bacteria. At the time, some of the bacterial contamination was attributed to poorly constructed or maintained groundwater wells, leaky on-site septic systems, and the natural vulnerability of the shallow aquifer.

To address the advisory, the community of East Selkirk upgraded to a public water system. Today, more than 90% of the community receives its drinking water from the East Selkirk public water system. The East Selkirk public water system continues to meet Manitoba drinking water standards and Health Canada's *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality*. Private well owners are encouraged to connect to the municipal water system where possible.

Although the boil water advisory on the remaining private wells has been removed, this does not mean that existing private wells are free of bacteria. It is the responsibility of homeowners with a private well to undertake regular water quality testing, complete well maintenance, and install water treatment equipment where required to ensure their water is safe for drinking and other domestic purposes. In a community setting, wells are at higher risk from an increased number of contaminate sources (ex: nearby leaking on-site septic systems) and pathways (ex: nearby abandoned or poorly maintained wells). Water quality testing is the only way to confirm the safety of the water.

Resources are available to homeowners to help assess well water risk factors and provide assistance with well management and drinking water safety. For more information, please visit www.manitoba.ca/drinkingwater or call the Office of Drinking Water at 204-945-5762.

Sincerely,

Dr. Tim Hilderman
Medical Officer of Health

Kimberley A. Philip, P.Eng.
Director, Office of Drinking Water

cc. Nancy Fitzgerald, Regional Drinking Water Officer