

## Do Not Drink Order for Skowhegan Has Been Lifted

*Water is safe to use for all purposes*

**Skowhegan, ME — Tuesday, November 17, 2020** — Upon review of test results from a state-certified laboratory of samples from Maine Water’s Skowhegan system, the Maine CDC has confirmed that the water meets all state and federal drinking water standards and has lifted the “Do Not Drink” order that was issued last week. Customers may now resume use of water for all purposes, including drinking and food preparation.

The company continues to provide water to customers from the alternate supply in the Kennebec River and has fully flushed the system after the odor was originally detected. It is recommended that customers run the cold water through the largest tap in the house (typically the bathtub for a few minutes to flush any stagnant water that may be in their own home’s internal plumbing.

“We know this event has been a big inconvenience for our customers,” said Rick Knowlton, president of Maine Water. “We thank our customers, employees, municipal and state officials, the media, and our partners in the business community for their support and patience as we conducted our investigation, made operational changes and confirmed the water quality in the system through independent lab analysis. The rapid response and collaboration by all parties was truly impressive and greatly appreciated.”

While the order was in place, Maine Water partnered with municipal and state officials and local businesses to supply bottled water and a drinking water filling station to customers. The company also provided bottled water to critical customers such as nursing homes, the county jail, medical facilities and Skowhegan schools to ensure that they could remain open.

Knowlton said the company’s first priority was confirming the quality of the water for consumers to drink. Only when water quality test results confirmed that there were no regulated contaminants detected and that the water meets all state and federal water quality standards was the Do Not Drink order lifted.

The company continues to investigate the cause of the soapy smell that was first noticed on Thursday, which appears to be related to construction work done on a dam between Upper and Lower ponds, the primary water source for Skowhegan. On Friday, the company switched the water source to the Kennebec River, and will continue use that source to serve the system until the investigation concludes.

“We recently installed a new flow control structure between the two ponds,” Knowlton said. “Last Monday, the 9th of November, we were working to reduce leakage around the new structure. Our very strong suspicion today is that project work is connected to the odor, but we need confirmation through further laboratory analysis, which is underway. The good news is that on a project like that, we only use

materials with NSF 61 certification\*, which means they are safe for use in drinking water applications. Maine Water will answer the question of “what happened” and we will share our findings with our customers, the Skowhegan community, and Maine’s Drinking Water Program.”

Maine Water continues to communicate proactively with customers, directly and via the company’s web site ([www.MaineWater.com](http://www.MaineWater.com)) and social media channels. If customers have any questions, they should call the Maine Water customer service team at 800-287-1643.

**\*Web link** --- NSF International is a global, independent organization, whose standards team facilitates development of public health standards. Their service teams test, audit and certify products and services. An NSF certification assures consumers, retailers and regulators that certified products have been rigorously tested to comply with all standard requirements. For more information: <https://www.nsf.org/about-nsf>

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#### About Maine Water

Maine Water serves 32,000 customers, or a population of 100,000, in 21 communities throughout the state of Maine. For more information, visit [www.MaineWater.com](http://www.MaineWater.com)

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