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Regional Water System Addressing Non-Toxic Compound Affecting Taste and Smell

Some water customers of the Summerville Commissioners of Public Works, Berkeley County Water and Sanitation, Moncks Corner Public Works Commission and the City of Goose Creek may notice a slightly different taste in their tap water. The cause is Geosmin, a non-toxic, non-harmful organic compound just discovered in Lake Moultrie.

Geosmin can occur in surface water after a period of below-freezing temperatures. The Santee Cooper Regional Water System has sampled water at its Lake Moultrie plant and at distribution points serving these four agencies, and test results confirmed Geosmin in concentrations of 77 to 95 parts per trillion throughout the system. Geosmin has an earthy smell, which can be detected in concentrations below 30 parts per trillion.

“Although some people may find the odor or taste unpleasant, Geosmin is not harmful. The water is safe to drink, and we are working to bring back its normal taste and smell as quickly as we can,” said Brian Lynch, manager of water systems for Santee Cooper.

The Regional Water System has begun adding powder-activated carbon to remove Geosmin and is working closely with the Summerville, Berkeley, Moncks Corner and Goose Creek agencies to provide updates.

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