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Abstract (Summary)

What has [Tony Knott] and his neighbours so upset is a report by Robert Bradbury, chief environmental health officer with the Capital Health Region, that concludes that many of the residential wells are contaminated with chromium.

Knott said his family relies on bottled water to drink and uses well water for bathing. But even then he has concerns. He's had to "shock" his well with chlorine to clean it up.

It could cost \$1 million to extend the municipal water line to the 25-30 homes on **Senanus** Drive, said [Gary Nason].

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Full Text (517 words)

(Copyright Times Colonist (Victoria) 1999)

A long-simmering dispute between Central Saanich council and residents of two dozen homes is about to boil over.

Some **Senanus** Drive residents armed with a report saying their well water is bad are frustrated the municipality isn't moving quickly toward hooking them into the municipal water supply.

The waterfront neighbourhood west of West Saanich Road features many nice homes, with several properties valued in the millions.

"They don't want us to get city water -- they just don't want us to have it," concluded resident Tony Knott on Tuesday.

What has Knott and his neighbours so upset is a report by Robert Bradbury, chief environmental health officer with the Capital Health Region, that concludes that many of the residential wells are contaminated with chromium.

The combination of chromium and chlorine means the water "can become toxic," said Bradbury in an interview Tuesday.

"Chromium is one of those elements that can be good for you or it can be bad for you."

The danger comes when residents add chlorine to their well in an attempt to disinfect the water on a regular basis.

Residents who continually chlorinate their wells with chlorine could become ill,

he said.

Knott said his family relies on bottled water to drink and uses well water for bathing. But even then he has concerns. He's had to "shock" his well with chlorine to clean it up.

"It's very distressing. You don't even know if it can be absorbed through the skin. We've complained for the longest time."

The municipality has explored various options, said clerk Gary Nason.

"One of the options is putting a water line down Mount Newton Cross Road. But there are other options council has asked (staff) to explore, such as a community well owned and operated by residents or a community well owned and operated by the municipality or delivery of water via trucks."

It could cost \$1 million to extend the municipal water line to the 25-30 homes on **Senanus** Drive, said Nason.

Only some of these homeowners are complaining of bad water, he added.

"The issue in a nutshell is the solution that seems appropriate is quite costly," he said.

Before they take a closer look at extending the line, Nason said council wants to be sure the water testing is done thoroughly and correctly.

"Council has said we're not satisfied your first level of testing was sufficiently extensive," Nason said.

"They've asked for further testing of wells on all the properties on **Senanus** Drive and they've asked this be expedited as a priority."

Meanwhile, Knott said the water quality continues to worsen.

"We've noticed a decline in quality. People have been requesting water out here for 30 years. Over the last three years there's been a heavy push.

"There's no good answer for this thing except for us getting city water.

"It's more than frustrating -- it's serious. If somebody gets cancer out here in the next little while there would be a huge liability problem for the municipality.

"It's not a good situation."

[Illustration]

Photo: Ray Smith/Times Colonist / Knott with a glass of affected water. ;

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