

The Privatization of Water: Six More Charged in Flint Water Crisis, but Still No Accountability for Governor Snyder

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'Most of the questions involving the Flint water crisis and Gov. Snyder are still unanswered,' says Common Cause

Six additional state employees now face criminal charges for hiding unsafe lead levels leading up to the Flint water crisis—but Gov. Rick Snyder and his top officials continue to evade accountability.

Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette [announced](#) the charges in a press conference on Friday, in which he vowed that “the families of Flint will not be forgotten; we will provide the justice they deserve.”



Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette on Friday charged six more state employees with felonies for their alleged role in Flint’s water contamination. (Screenshot)

Of those charged, Schuette said: “Their offenses vary but there is an overall theme and repeated pattern. Each of these individuals attempted to bury, or cover up, to downplay or hide information that contradicted their own narrative, their story. Their story was there was nothing wrong with Flint water and it was perfectly safe to use.”

“These individuals concealed the truth,” he said. “They were criminally wrong to do so.”

According to news reports, those charged are Michigan Department of Health and Human Services workers Nancy Peeler, [Corinne Miller](#), and Robert Scott and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality employees Leanne Smith, Adam Rosenthal, and Patrick Cook.

MLive [reports](#):

Peeler, Miller and Scott were charged with misconduct in office, conspiracy to commit misconduct in office and willful neglect of duty.

Shekter Smith was charged with misconduct in office and willful neglect of duty.

Cook is accused of misconduct in office, conspiracy to engage in misconduct in office and neglect of duty.

Rosenthal was charged with misconduct in office, conspiracy to tamper with evidence, tampering with evidence and neglect.

[According to](#) the *Detroit News*:

Peeler and Scott's charges center around a report epidemiologist Cristin Larder prepared last fall showing elevated blood lead testing in Flint residents last July, August and September, according Jeff Seipenko, an investigator in Schuette's office.

"Scott and Peeler conspired together and with others known and unknown to effectively bury Larder's report warranting further investigation," Seipenko said Friday morning in court. "Defendants Peeler and Scott's failure to disclose Larder's report was to the detriment of the health and welfare of the citizens of Flint."

Three other local and state employees [were charged](#) in April, bringing the total number of people charged in connection to the health crisis to nine.

Schuette said Friday that his team was "way far from done"—offering a modicum of assurance to those seeking accountability from Snyder and other top officials.

And Andrew Arena, lead investigator in the case and former head of the FBI office in Detroit, added: "You don't start at the top. Like organized crime, we are working our way up in the DEQ and expanding the scope of investigation."

But Special Prosecutor Todd Flood may have eroded some of that confidence by [declining](#) to say at Friday's press conference whether he has interviewed Snyder or the governor's former top aide, Dennis Muchmore, or issued subpoenas to either man to compel testimony under oath in a deposition.

Gov. Snyder and his emergency manager have yet to be held accountable for creating the [#FlintWaterCrisis](#)

— Flint Rising (@FlintRising) [29 July 2016](#)

Flint investigator says: You don't start at the top. Is he giving Snyder and emergency managers cover? [#FlintWaterCrisis](#)

— Progress Michigan (@ProgressMich) [29 July 2016](#)

[#FlintWaterCrisis](#) Criminal charges for 6 state employees, but Snyder remains untouched, why when his cost cutting measures are to blame?

— Daniel Jaquier (@Roolbreaker1) [29 July 2016](#)

Enough with the distractions, Mr. AG—charge Governor Snyder and let's get this over with. The people of Flint are... <https://t.co/IXfTto6FKZ>

— Mitchell Robinson (@mrobmsu) [29 July 2016](#)

“The charges filed today against six state employees involved in the Flint water crisis are a step in the right direction to ensure our government is accountable to its citizens,” the pro-democracy group Common Cause and its Michigan affiliate [said](#) in a statement on Friday.

“However, there is still a lack of transparency and accountability surrounding the crisis in Flint,” the statement continued. “Most of the questions involving the Flint water crisis and Gov. Snyder are still unanswered. The people of Flint, and the entire state of Michigan, deserve to know the full extent of Gov. Snyder’s involvement and knowledge of this crisis.”

Meanwhile, Flint Mayor Karen Weaver [told](#) the Democratic National Convention this week that in her city, the

“water is still not safe to drink or cook with from the tap. Our infrastructure is broken, leaking and rusting away. Our local economy, already down when the water crisis struck, struggles to rebound. And there are many more Flints across the country where environmental issues are hurting our kids and families.”

She specifically [called out](#) the “Republican state government” for using Michigan’s [emergency manager law](#) “to take over control of the city.”

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