

Report prompts questions about utilities project

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CAPE CORAL: Cape Coral's mayor is concerned some homeowners have contaminated well water. He wants to continue the Utilities Expansion Project, even if federal funding doesn't come through.

"There's a concern that the water may not meet drinking water standards," said Cape Coral Public Works Director Chuck Pavlos.

A report from Lee County and Florida health departments showed of 500 wells tested last year, ten were contaminated with some form of bacteria.

"They found some coliform and fecal bacteria in the water," Pavlos said.

Right now, more than 22,000 homes in the Cape use well water.

The city asked the health department to test the water because they needed the report for their application for federal stimulus dollars to pay for the Utilities Expansion Project.

Last month, the city council voted to delay the UEP for SW6 and SW7 and the north Cape for two years.

Now, the Mayor wonders if the report should prompt another discussion about the UEP.

"It certainly does drive home the idea that we're doing the utility project for a purpose," said Mayor Jim Burch.

The health department only tests private wells if asked by a homeowner.

Even though only ten wells were contaminated, health officials say even a trace of unhealthy water demands attention.

"Cape Coral residents, we're worried about their health, welfare and safety. We want to make sure they have safe and reliable drinking water," said Pavlos.

The health department says if you you're on well water you cannot taste the bacteria, but it can make you sick. You'll feel like you have the flu.

Bacteria isn't the only issue with well water. Saltwater intrusion can be a problem in the dry season.