



701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

Department Source: City Utilities - Water and Light

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: April 20, 2026

Re: Abatement Order on Consent by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Impacted Ward: Citywide

Executive Summary

Staff has prepared for Council consideration an ordinance authorizing the City Manager to execute an Abatement Order on Consent (AOC) by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). The AOC details the terms for resolution of the violation and requires the payment of \$3,616.22 for costs and damages incurred by the state for a series of water main breaks that discharged chloraminated water to Flat Branch Creek.

Discussion

The Abatement Order on Consent (AOC) issued by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) is a formal administrative action by the state to resolve violations of the Missouri Clean Water Law due to three water main breaks. The AOC references three watermain breaks that happened pre-dawn on the morning of October 2, 2023. The watermain breaks occurred at 310 Pendleton Walkway (Lasalle Pl), 21 East Stewart Road, and 307 Trinity Place. The lines were old 4" - 6" cast iron pipes and the drought caused the mains to shift and break. All three breaks were repaired by Water Utility staff. Because of the watermain breaks, chloraminated water flowed into Flat Branch Creek and that afternoon the City was notified of cloudy water in the creek by a citizen. Staff investigated, confirming the cloudy water and a few dead fish. City staff self-reported the violation to MDNR that same day.

On October 3, 2023 MDNR investigated Flat Branch Creek from Grasslands Park to the Fourth Street and Cherry Street intersection. Water Distribution staff walked with them during the investigation. The cloudy water and fish kills were confirmed during the investigation. Water samples and pictures of the fish were also taken.

On October 30, 2023, the MDNR issued Referral Notice of Violation (RNOV) No. NE230057 to the City and referred the issue to the Compliance and Enforcement Section of MDNR. On January 29, 2026, MDNR reached out to the City requesting financial and community information. The City responded with the information on February 13, 2026.

From the investigation, it was determined that water from the watermain breaks resulted in the deaths of five fish, damages totaling \$0.76. Staffing costs incurred by the state during the fish kill investigation was \$3,543.91 and the state incurred \$71.55 in expense and equipment costs during the investigation. The total for costs and damages incurred by the state for the incident was \$3,616.22.

The stated violations included:

- Discharged water contaminants to Flat Branch Creek, waters of the State, which reduced the quality of such waters below the general criteria water quality standards.
- Caused pollution of Flat Branch Creek, waters of the State, or placed or caused or permitted to be placed a water contaminant, chlorinated water, in a location where it was reasonably certain to cause pollution of waters of the State.

This AOC details the terms for resolution of the violation. It requires signing the agreement and payment of \$3,616.22.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: Payment of cost incurred by the state of \$3,616.22

Long-Term Impact: None

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

[Strategic Plan Impacts:](#)

Primary Impact: Reliable and Sustainable Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Not Applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

[Comprehensive Plan Impacts:](#)

Primary Impact: Environmental Management, Secondary Impact: Not applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Legislative History

Date	Action

Suggested Council Action

Approve the ordinance.