

Spirit Lake Nation to go without drinkable tap water for 2 weeks

STAFF REPORTS
FORT TOTTEN, N.D. — Excessive amounts of manganese in Spirit Lake Nation water will leave residents without drinkable tap water for roughly two weeks, tribal leaders said.
Water collected from the tribe's water treatment plant on May 13 and

20 showed elevated levels of the metal, according to a public service announcement posted on the Spirit Lake Nation's Facebook page Tuesday, May 27. Manganese at unsafe levels can cause health issues, especially in infants, the tribe said.
Tribal leaders are working to correct the

manganese levels, the announcement said. Initially, the tribe said a filter to remove the metal wouldn't be installed until late August.
A release issued Wednesday said the tribe planned to install a temporary water filtration system in 14 days, meaning residents should not

drink tap water until at least June 11.
The announcement advised residents within the reservation boundaries not to drink tap water. The water is safe for exterior uses, such as bathing, washing clothes and rinsing fruits and vegetables, as long as residents let the fruits and

vegetables dry, the announcement said.
Spirit Lake Nation emergency crews started handing out cases of bottled water to residents on Wednesday. Families with infants who rely on formula, older residents and individuals with medical conditions are being given priority, the release

said.
Information on how to obtain bottled water can be found at shorturl.at/k91F4.
The Spirit Lake Reservation is in the northeast central part of the state.

METALS

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minerals are key to numerous military technologies and are used for clean energy applications, too, such as the batteries needed for electric vehicles, and energy storage that helps the reliability of renewables.

The United States is heavily reliant on foreign countries for battery production and the critical minerals that batteries are made from. The project represents an effort to pursue more U.S.-based battery manufacturing under the 2021 infrastructure law. The legislation made \$2.8 billion in federal dollars available for plants such as Talon's.

To officially start building, Talon will need to meet state regulatory requirements at the PSC and the Department of Environmental Quality. Talon will also have to receive approval under the federal National Environmental Policy Act process because of the federal money that is involved.

The company faces a somewhat more challenging permitting process in Minnesota, where the nickel is set to come from. Its permit to



Joey Harris / The Bismarck Tribune

North Dakota Gov. Kelly Armstrong speaks during a ceremony Wednesday, May 28, in Beulah, announcing the planned location for Talon Metals' nickel plant. From left are Talon President Mike Kicis, U.S. Rep. Julie Fedorchak, R-N.D., and North Dakota Republican Sens. Kevin Cramer and John Hoeven.

extract nickel from the Tamarack Mine in the Iron Range has been in a scoping phase of an environmental review process at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for around two years.

Talon President Mike Kicis told the Tribune that the scoping phase does not have a set timeline, but the next step in environmental permitting does, and the company expects to be in that phase by the end of the year. He said that

Minnesota state regulators have been impressed by the company's efforts to revise its mining plan for Tamarack compared to a traditional mine.

"It's an underground mine (where) the tunnel comes straight into a building ... This (building) is about the size of a Super Target, the ore gets crushed, the trains come right into the building and out," he said. The goal of this design is to limit air and water pollution.

Kicis said there are

places in Canada where the company could source nickel if Tamarack falls through.

When asked if the project would have been possible without the federal money, Kicis said, "I think it would have been a real challenge."

"China and some of those competitors out in the world, they've got endless capital, but having the markets we do that are free and open, sometimes you need a little bit of that stimulation to get people to believe

that it can happen here," he said.

Armstrong, who was North Dakota's sole U.S. representative until last year, did not vote for the infrastructure law. Sens. John Hoeven and Kevin Cramer did. Armstrong praised the work of the company, past governors and the congressional delegation on Wednesday.

"It's easy to beat up on the federal government, and sometimes it doesn't even matter who's in charge, but without the (Energy Department's) help, some of these things wouldn't exist," he said.

Part of what drove Talon to bring the plant to North Dakota was how dry it is. One of the main concerns related to the mining plan is Tamarack's proximity to wetlands and other bodies of water. Processing the ore in North Dakota reduces that footprint. The state's business-friendly regulatory environment drew the company in, too.

Talon expects the plant to create around 150 full-time jobs once it is built. That could create a big influx for Beulah, where the population is just over 3,000.

"We just had our housing study done. We need

352 new single-family and multi-family homes, and we're working with a local developer right now to take and develop and build 85 of them," said Brinkman, the economic development director.

North Dakota state Rep. Bill Tviet, R-Hazen, said he was looking forward to the project moving forward. Hazen has a population of about 2,300.

"Some (of my constituents) are very excited; some don't understand it. There's a fear of the unknown, but the longer I've worked with this, the more I see this is going to be positive," he said.

Getting more houses built will be important if the plans that lawmakers have for the area are seen through.

North Dakota's lignite coal holds other critical minerals that could be mined and processed in-state, and the Legislature recently passed a regulatory framework aimed at getting a mining process to go forward.

Other projects related to Talon's could also spring up, Hoeven told the Tribune.

"We're already talking to other companies about coming in here. This thing has big potential," he said.

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PREVIOUS SOLUTION

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8	9	6	5	4	2	3	1	7
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