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## Research sought before Croton adds anti-corrosive to water supply

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The village of Croton is preparing to add a new chemical to the municipal water supply.

Village leaders held off on a vote to approve the new additive, zinc orthophosphate, to carry out more research on potential effects. A vote is expected to be taken at the next meeting of the village Board of Trustees on Oct. 15, even as some local residents have expressed concern over the chemical compound.

Chazen Environmental Services Inc. of Poughkeepsie was hired in the fall of 2006 at a cost of \$8,750 to look at the brown-water problem that has bedeviled many village households for years. The village replaced many of the old iron pipes responsible for the murky, rust-colored water in the south end of town for about \$1.4 million.

Chazen, which is getting \$25,000 for water-related issues, also recommended the addition of zinc orthophosphate into the water supply, which adds a microscopic, chemical film to the inside surface of water pipes, inhibiting corrosion. Because some homes in the village also have problems with lead infiltration in the water, Mayor Greg Schmidt said he was in favor of the additive.

Some local residents, however, are calling for a cautious approach.

"I think we should spend more time reviewing this," said Dan Ferguson, who came to Village Hall this week to air his concerns.

Another resident, Robert Wintermeier, said, "Moving slowly, that's the bottom line. It's better to err on the side of safety."

Plumbers used lead soldering until it was outlawed in 1986, and the lead soldering between joints can leach into drinking water within the home. As an anti-corrosive, zinc orthophosphate helps reduce that likelihood.

A variety of orthophosphates are added to many municipal water sources around the country. Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., have made use of the additive, as well as many communities in northern New Jersey, Peekskill, Yonkers and Sound shore communities served by Westchester Joint Water Works.

Some Croton residents have cited a problem with anti-corrosive additives used on the Hawaiian island of Maui, and local press reports there describe a few dozen complaints about rashes, sore throats and other allergic reactions. The complaints have not been definitively linked to the use of orthophosphates, but the matter is under review by Hawaiian authorities, according to news accounts.

Schmidt said he was not concerned that the additive would cause any problems.

"It will help the system last longer, keep the brown water down, keep the lead from leaching in," said Schmidt. "And the amount is so minuscule, it's almost negligible."

The village is looking to add almost four gallons of the additive for every billion gallons of water, at a maximum.

The Environmental Protection Agency lists zinc and orthophosphates as "generally recognized as safe" as long as they are properly used in trace amounts.

Village leaders decided to gather more information before the vote on Oct. 15.

"Let's get all the questions answered. Let's raise the comfort level," Trustee Ann Gallelli said.

The village will also determine if the sewage plant in Ossining run by Westchester County that processes Croton's wastewater has any objections to the additive.

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