

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20510

March 25, 2008

Secretary Michael O. Leavitt  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Leavitt:

We write to urge the Department of Health and Human Services to promptly provide the assistance requested on March 24, 2008 by Colorado Governor Bill Ritter, Jr.

After suspecting that several reported cases of salmonella were caused by water in the City of Alamosa's system, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment issued a boil/bottled water order for Alamosa residents on March 19, 2008. Governor Ritter declared a disaster emergency on March 21, activating the National Guard and other state resources. The City of Alamosa is now flushing the entire water system with high doses of chlorine, a process that could take a few weeks. About 10,000 residents and many restaurants and other business are affected by this situation.

We have visited with Alamosa City officials and town residents and saw that the community has responded admirably to this crisis. Alamosa has received a great deal of assistance from the State of Colorado and other communities across Colorado. However, the resources of the State and local governments are reaching their limits. Therefore, the Governor has requested that your Department provide five environmental personnel to assist with food establishment inspections, two epidemiologists to assist with community surveys, two risk communication experts and additional water engineers and water quality experts. This assistance from the federal government will provide important services to Alamosa residents.

We urge your prompt attention to the Governor's request and look forward to the Department's assistance in Alamosa.

Sincerely,

  
Ken Salazar  
United States Senator

  
John Salazar  
United States Congressman