Mandatory Health Effects
Language for Nitrate

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets drinking water standards and has determined that nitrate poses as acute health concern at certain levels of exposure. Nitrate is used in fertilizer and is found in sewage and wastes from human and/or farm animals and generally gets into drinking water from those activities. Excessive levels of nitrate in drinking water have caused serious illness and sometimes death in infants under six months of age. The serious illness in infants is caused because nitrate is converted to nitrite in the body. Nitrite interferes with the oxygen carrying capacity of the child’s blood. This is an acute disease in that symptoms can develop rapidly in infants. In most cases, health deteriorates over a period of days. Symptoms include shortness of breath and blueness of the skin. Clearly, expert medical advice should be sought immediately if these symptoms occur. The purpose of this notice is to encourage parents and other responsible parties to provide infants with an alternate source of drinking water. Local and state health authorities are the best source for information concerning alternate sources of drinking water for infants. EPA has set the drinking water standard for nitrite at 1ppm. To allow for the fact that the toxicity of nitrate and nitrite are additives, EPA has also established a standard for the sum of nitrate and nitrite at 10ppm. Drinking water that meets the EPA standard is associated with little to none of this risk and is considered safe with respect to nitrate.