

From: **Siddhartha Roy** <sidroy@vt.edu>  
Date: Thu, Sep 24, 2020 at 9:22 PM  
Subject: Flint tweets and speculation about my scientific op-ed  
To: <XXX@uiowa.edu>

Dear Dr. Seamster,

My name is Siddhartha Roy and I am a postdoc at Virginia Tech.

I came across some fascinating commentary you made ([https://twitter.com/louise\\_seamster/status/1307287118440431617](https://twitter.com/louise_seamster/status/1307287118440431617)) about my Flint op-ed (<https://undark.org/2020/09/17/flint-water-crisis-sewage/>). Specifically, you speculated that the timing of this op-ed coming out AFTER the \$600mn settlement announcement is very suspect. **Do you have any evidence or documentation about this?** This is puzzling because I conceived the op-ed and wrote most of it in late-July to accompany the release of a new paper (<https://pubs.rsc.org/en/content/articlelanding/2020/ew/d0ew00583e>), involved Dr. Marc Edwards for some revisions, and then first pitched to a newspaper Aug 10 (the settlement news leaked Aug 19).

To add some more scientific context, our key finding about water lead levels spiking sharply in summer 2014 and then dropping in Flint (hence, the reasoning that the crisis was a disaster and criminal, but contrary to speculation that lead levels got progressively worse over the crisis' 18 months as first feared) was already published in our May 2019 study (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31177077/>) and written up in an MLive article (<https://www.mlive.com/news/flint/2019/05/researchers-say-sewage-data-holds-clues-to-flint-water-crisis.html>) and a Mother Jones piece (<https://www.motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2019/05/a-brand-new-look-at-lead-contamination-in-flint/>) last year. In fact, Kettering's Dr. Ben Pauli quoted it in his paper earlier this year: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/wat2.1420> (pages 2 and 5). Most of what is in the op-ed is not new information.

An MLive reporter contacted Dr. Edwards about the op-ed and he re-shared our findings that were, again, summarized in the Water Research paper and MLive/Mother Jones articles from 2019. I do not know how you feel about Dr. Edwards and why, and that is not my business. Nor is what you do on your Twitter page. However, I am curious about your speculations.

I also have questions about the scientific and sociological rationale behind your other tweets (especially, comparing our support of Flint pediatricians' use of the term "lead exposed" for Flint children [<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/22/opinion/flint-lead-poisoning-water.html>] to the gruesome killing of George Floyd being ascribed to his pre-existing conditions), but for now would be satisfied with **any evidence you can provide for your tweet that I deliberately chose to release the op-ed after the settlement announcement.**

Many thanks,  
Sid

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Siddhartha Roy  
Virginia Tech