



Nicolas Storellicastro, City Manager  
6 N. Main Street, Suite 2  
(802) 476-0241  
[citymanager@barrecity.org](mailto:citymanager@barrecity.org)

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## **Statement from the City Manager regarding the water main break on South Main Street**

At approximately 5:00am on Thursday, a major water leak was detected in the low-pressure transmission line located in the vicinity of Route 14 (South Main Street) and Mill Street. City crews immediately mobilized to identify, contain, and repair the break. Due to the volume of water that was being discharged into the dig site, crews were unable to reach the damaged pipe.

At approximately 4:00pm on Thursday, Public Works requested my approval to shut off the low-pressure transmission line completely to allow water to drain from the dig site. I approved this action because it was determined to be the only way to allow crews to reach the damaged transmission line. I knew at the time that the consequence of this decision was the loss of water service to approximately 3,500 customers of the system. At approximately 5:45pm, a system-wide boil water notice was also issued.

After the low-pressure transmission line was shut off, crews were able to locate the damaged pipe at 1:30am on Friday. While City maps showed that the transmission line was 10 feet below ground, it was eventually located approximately 15 feet underground.

The repairs on the transmission line were completed early Friday morning. Once the repair was completed, Water Treatment staff began the process of resuming flow through the low-pressure line to restore water service. Water began flowing through the transmission line under a controlled recharging exercise. This process is completed slowly because a rapid pressurization of the system risked another major break.

This is an unprecedented action – nobody on staff recalls a time when an entire transmission line had to be shut off to complete a repair. As a result, we are exercising caution during the recharging process and it will take several hours to complete. Some users in low-lying areas of the City, like downtown, already have water service. Other customers will continue to come online, and most users should have some water by 8:00pm.

As the system was being pressurized, we reached out to the Scott Administration for assistance in providing drinking water to our affected residents. Within hours, pallets of water had arrived and were being distributed. We thank the Governor, his team and our staff for their quick response and for standing up distribution centers throughout the city.

The boil water notice remains in effect for all water customers (even those who did not experience a significant decrease in water pressure). We expect this to be lifted early next week.

Many Public Works employees worked around the clock responding to this incident. They have worked long hours in challenging conditions to restore water service. The City is thankful and appreciative of their dedication and good work.