

FIGHTING FOR FLINT

Edwards also said on the website that FACHEP's legitimacy was now "completely tied" to McElmurry's proving his claims about his earlier work in Flint.¹⁰¹ It was another sign of how thoroughly divorced Edwards's understanding of credibility was from that of the Flint residents I knew. Whereas there was plenty of community interest now in FACHEP's findings, there was almost none whatsoever that I could detect—certainly among activists—in what McElmurry did or did not do in Flint prior to the water crisis. In fact, Edwards's attack, in conjunction with his earlier testimony for Lyon and Wells, provoked the fiercest backlash against him yet. One prominent activist who had never spoken out against Edwards before excoriated him up and down social media for doing the work of the state by trying to destroy McElmurry's reputation, posting a headshot of Edwards struck through with a red "no symbol" and bracketed by the words "Your 'Welcome to Flint' Card has been REVOKED!! GET OUT AND DON'T COME

BACK!!" And in the most stunning development yet, 40 residents signed a letter in protest of Edwards's attack on FACHEP and behavior toward the community generally, sending it to a variety of professional engineering and scientific associations and calling for an independent investigation. After the letter was posted online to Flintcomplaints.com, signatures from residents and outside supporters continued to stream in. Edwards, denouncing what he called the letter's "many false claims"¹⁰² and depicting it as a plot by Melissa Mays to smear him, pledged to track down each of its signatories individually and ask them whether they agreed with its every last word.¹⁰³