

March 16, 2026

Attn: Matthew Phillips  
Detroit Water and Sewerage Department  
Board of Water Commissioners  
Customer Service Committee  
735 Randolph St.  
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Attn: Michael Einheuser, Mary E. Blackmon, Lane Coleman, John Henry Davis, Linda D. Forte,  
Jane C. Garcia, Jonathan C. Kinloch  
Detroit Water and Sewerage Department  
Board of Water Commissioners  
735 Randolph St.  
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to follow-up on my continued concern of water inequity for residents of Detroit.

As you know around one year ago I first brought to your attention with a packet of public records, that landlord Jeffrey Cowin owed nearly \$40k in water and sewage fees to DWSD. Speaking with your general counsel several months ago who had requested some guidance on properties he owns, I learned Cowin called DWSD the day that DWSD had planned to call him, and was able to get on separate payment plans for the properties by speaking with separate Customer Service agents who were apparently not aware he owed money on various properties or the total of nearly \$40k.

When I spoke with your general counsel Jimmy, he said at the time Cowin was not yet on a payment plan for the mansion he owns and rents out on VRBO in Brush Park. Such continued absence of enforcement by DWSD months after a member of the public had brought these problems to your attention, fosters a lack of trust in your agency and the City of Detroit's revitalization and current mayoral administration tone of "Rise Up."

As DWSD recognizes "good municipal citizenship" I would also like to inform your body that Cowin has attempted to silence me by intimidation of a Cease and Desist letter containing false allegations in late September 2025. His bullying is only made possible in a City of Detroit culture of negligence in passive and active complicity, of which DWSD has been a part in not enforcing water payments for so many years.

Once again I emphasize that in no other city or rural area in which I have lived including Latin America, East Asia, and East Africa, have I not had access to running water as I experienced in 2022 due to Cowin's negligence and abuse of power, and DWSD's negligence to enforce water and sewage payment responsibility of landlords. I have not yet been made whole and continue to experience stress from experiencing the emergency that never needed to be.

1. How does DWSD square allowing a landlord who has caused harm to tenant health and my parents' risk as well, from a water-shut off and forced displacement when I had COVID, who had racked up almost \$40k in debt over many years, to get on a standard payment plan that is the same payment plan as City of Detroit residents who are in poverty? This universal policy and program while admittedly requiring less paperwork on the part of DWSD customer service, seems indefensibly inequitable in allowing landlords to exploit the system. It reinforces an absence of accountability.
2. I request clarification on this inequity of enforcement treating commercial businesses and residents the same when one profits and the other is just trying to survive, and an update on the accountability of DWSD in ensuring Cowin pays his water bills on all properties.

Thank you in advance for addressing these problems of inequity and absence of accountability.

Sincerely,  
Bridget

Bridget Scallen