



WATER IS AN
ESSENTIAL
HUMAN RIGHT

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Hydrate Detroit would appreciate a time sensitive response back within 7-10 Business Days following receipt of this letter. Thank you very much in advance.

Monday April 15, 2019

Dear Detroit Water Board Commissioner
John Henry Davis,

Hydrate Detroit is a local 501C3 water rights organization helping people in the city of Detroit maintain access to clean H2O by delivering emergency water and working actively with residents to restore water service to prevent water shutoffs. Hydrate Detroit have been serving in operation since June 2016 following a transition from our former group, The Detroit Water Brigade. We provide quality customer service to the community along with providing love, empathy and compassion. Hydrate Detroit also advocates and works with other groups and organizations for clean water rights across the city of Detroit and the state of Michigan.

Hydrate Detroit would like to work with you in following up for a private meeting discussing solutions and creating partnership, out of the spirit of positive action to move our city forward ensuring water is an essential human right and that everyone have access to clean running water to all Detroit residents.

Commissioner Davis, Please find this letter as an official interest working in the spirit of "Partnership" as we work together to solve the various water issues in our city today, by recognizing that "we cannot do this alone, we must help each other" in achieving the goals of success for our city to thrive. Hydrate Detroit have knowledge about water infrastructure and can share insight into developing solutions that are innovative, bold and efficiently working to save our city and residents money, benefitting everyone living in our city today. I truly believe our city can help produce solutions and find adequate funding to fix our infrastructure and help with water bills starting right here in the city of Detroit.

Let me say in my honest opinion, the citizens of Detroit deserve much better input and involvement of the largest water department in regards to taking action against water shutoffs and giving citizens a fair deal by proposing solutions and helping Detroit Homeowners, the disabled, senior citizens and low income

families maintain access by making water more affordable, so nobody would have to live without water or denied access to clean running water.

Commissioner Davis, I would like to talk with you on the subject of finding solutions to provide extra care and consideration to Detroit residents and as water shutoffs are due to be announced in the middle of a budget process, and a pending water rate increase, I want to propose meeting with you privately to discuss more information about my request. Please consider my request to meet ASAP at any date, time or location of your preference.

As you aware Commissioner Davis, Detroit Water Shutoffs have been a major issue since 2014 with over 150,000 low income residents fallen victim of their taps being shut without due process or proper investigation preventing a life threatening situation. As we all know, water shutoffs do not help but harm residents in the city of Detroit and the situation does absolutely nothing to keep residents out of financial harm or further damage. Water shutoffs are dangerous as a public safety and health risk. Any more threats of water shutoffs from the leaders of this city cause unnecessary circumstances, stress, emotional duress and fallout for citizens in which this city cannot afford to be criticized for not having an adequate plan in place. Current measures such as the 10/30/50 program and WRAP assistance program have failed the citizens of The City of Detroit with unaffordable water bills making the problem worse than before, widespread water problems at residents homes not being addressed in a timely and efficient manner and the water bills are rising higher without any valid justified reasoning to residents, citizens, businesses and stakeholders across the city. Water is the one resource we all are blessed to share across this region, let us work together to ensure that "Water is an Essential Human Right" across these 140 square miles in the city of Detroit.

Commissioner Davis, I also would like to express that my main objectives into working with you is to include,

- Protection against water shutoffs and disconnections for city residents facing water problems.
- Designate to open up water hubs inside the District Offices in the city of Detroit by ensuring residents have a safe and accessible way to obtain resources and information to prevent water service from service disconnection with a water department official to take and address residential customers and their concerns.
- Advocating and implementing solutions to stop water shutoffs in the city of Detroit citing concerns of official public safety and health hazards,
- By engaging and participating to protect the great lakes and Michigan's Drinking Water along with efforts to protect the Detroit River.
- Looking into research and development of other cities and their drinking water infrastructure
- Working with groups and organizations to develop a "citizen advisory board" to provide oversight of GLWA, Detroit Water Commissioners and Detroit Water and Sewerage Department.
- Working with your office and other stakeholders, partners, groups and organizations to form strategies on how to fundraise to pay off and zero out water bills for low income residents.
- Working together on making sure citizens having a hard time are offered help and resources by implementing the "Water Affordability Plan" for all residents living in the city of Detroit.
- Working with your office, groups, organizations and partner on green sustainability throughout the state by coming together to form strategies, research and development to adhere and

implement recommendations from "The Green New Deal" as outlined by New York State House Member Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

- Collaborate with you and your office on creating a week long water affordability fair and massive outreach to citizens to help settle their water bills before tax refunds are set to be released by the United States government.

Commissioner Davis, my proposal is simply to work together in preventing an unnecessary situation from happening again that is detrimental to the comeback of this city. As a water board commissioner, you are obligated to the citizens, residents and constituents you pledged to serve and protect in your duties helping to ensure that water would not get shutoff and that quality of life would get better. Now is the time to get involved and fix the situation of unaffordability by giving citizens a fair break by erasing the bulk of their arrears by paying down a final set price to bring the water bills to a zero balance out of Debt, and also offer resources, services and programs for residents to access and be considered without any beaurcatic difficulties, hang-ups and run arounds from Wayne Metro or any other organizations having a difficult time paying water bills that are over \$1,000 and cannot have any form of water relief or amnesty to pay the water bill in full at a half price.

"What are we doing to stop water shutoffs and work on water affordability as a priority to Detroiters?" it's a valid question.

Consider what has transpired since water shutoffs have happened without prevention measures or stopping a dangerous situation affecting 40% of the population of Detroit. Corporate leaders have given donations to help raise money to Pay Water Bills and it has been spent with no reallocation to get Detroiters out of debt and further troubles. Media and documentaries about the city of Detroit water crisis have recorded some of the most troubling images of residents going to neighbor homes to get water, buying water at local grocery markets to drink, bath, cook and wash. Even after some citizens gave their last dollar in hopes of paying off their water bill that has spiraled into thousands of dollars in hopes of paying off their water bill, only to get a bill with new charges that are unaffordable and unattainable. The payment plans are not working to stave off the debt. These images cannot be unseen and this situation have to be eradicated.

Where did this drainage fee come from and on what grounds to charge residents separately without any indicator or calculation of impervious surfaces measuring rainfall? Simply put, we cannot charge residents for rain that Mother Nature provides. Of course you remember the great flood of 2014 that ceded the highways and local basements with water that are not compensated fully to this day. Groups and organizations have approached you independently with their solutions and you have not given their ideas any considerations along with explaining the inability to adjust water bills by income and DWSD is not having any rapid or credible success at fixing this water situation from mismanagement, erroneous billing errors, miscalculations of payment plans and mismanagement of our only resource since the water department ran under apprenticeship by the emergency manager.

Commissioner Davis, we have a lot of work to do in fixing some of the situations I have laid out before you. Let us work together to listen, find solutions and roll up our sleeves to bring this city out of unaffordability and ensure that all Detroiters recognize their human rights to clean affordable water and the city provides top notch service. Let's not shutoff any more water on residents without finding out a solution to keep their water on. Let's not leave a family in emotional and financial distress without us

doing whatever we can to work with them to help. Let's work together in providing positive solutions and positive action to bring relief to all Detroiters. Let's do the right thing.

Commissioner Davis, I am expecting to hear your feedback in working together to help citizens and not to cause further harm or damage to our fair city. Let us please collaborate together to make water affordable in Detroit. Thank you for reading my letter. I hope to hear from you soon at your earliest convenience.

In warm and best regards,

Demeeke Williams

Chief Director, Hydrate Detroit