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**Wednesday May 20, 2020**

**Gary A. Brown**

**Executive Director**

**Detroit Water and Sewerage Department**

**735 Randolph Street**

**Detroit Michigan 48226**

Dear Mr. Brown,

I am writing to you directly in concern from a letter you wrote to the NAACP Legal Defense Counsel regarding the water executive order issued by Governor Gretchen Whitmer on April 27, 2020.

I seen a copy of this letter and cringed with disgust and absolute shock that the Executive Director of Detroit Water and Sewerage Department would write such a filthy and disrespectful letter to the body of the NAACP Legal Counsel, one of the most Prominent Historical Organizations for African American advocacy.

What would possess you to write such a letter in this horrendous fashion to that organization, when they asked you legitimate questions and stated facts for your reference. Your entire letter in response to them should have NEVER been sent out in the first place. The NAACP Legal Counsel wrote and advocated for the mayor and the water department to keep in compliance with the Governors executive order. The words, tone and construction of your letter to the NAACP legal counsel was very spiteful, unwarranted and should have never been written from the desk of your pen. As I see, this letter was originally sent to Mayor Mike Duggan for his response for which he never replies to any letters sent to him by residents regarding water shutoffs. I am very curious to ask, why was this response letter issued from you? To under what authority is given for you to respond with such a letter filled with your frustrations, the disgruntled anger in your tone of voice, your rage and built up disdain for the community is seething in your words throughout the letter is very concerning for anyone to read.

Newsflash Mr. Brown: ITS ALL YOUR FAULT, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE, TAKE OWNERSHIP AND STOP WHAT YOUR DOING TO DISRESPECT ADVOCATES AND COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS OF THE CITY OF DETROIT!!! You are the executive director of the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department. SHAME ON YOU!!

You should write a letter and apologize to the NAACP legal counsel authors and the organization itself for your personal comments reflected in the letter. You should write a letter issued to the NAACP and take back every word you wrote and apologize for your tone reflected as the executive director.

Gary, this letter I am writing you is out of concern for your leadership, your behavior and your actions over the past couple of months. You have totally lost control of this issue of water restoration and maybe should reconsider your position dealing with water shutoffs. Its best recommended that you appoint someone else to oversee this water restoration program other than yourself. Every word you said in this letter to discredit, disrespect and disregard water activists and advocates just further shows you have given no consideration to our solutions, you show no willingness to work with experts and advocates nor will you even reach your hands out to help advocates outreach like Hydrate Detroit which has raised more than \$5,000.00 raised by donations to the Detroit Water & Sewerage Department to help residents that have been shutoff or disconnected from their water service. Hydrate Detroit has also helped advocate for residents to keep their water on by getting another payment plan arrangement and working to reduce the bill or provide a settlement so that nobody water will be shutoff. Hydrate Detroit have been working with the customer service staff of DWSD and the collections unit in providing help to residents. This relationship have been toxic over the past three years speaking as myself, having to deal with your style of leadership personally and professionally. It is startling all of the things you wrote.

Gary, you disrespect me, you make unsavory comments, you get upset when people speak at public comments, your anger shows in each response you make in your director commentary at the Board of Water Commissioner Meetings or even at Public Community Meetings. I have continually offered my helping hand as well to help arrange meetings with the community coming to a settlement agreement ending water shutoffs once and for all. You balk at such conversations, quoting "The Headlee Amendment" and other laws which water activists and lawyers have debunked you. It makes no absolute sense and engaging in further damage of division. Your cruelty to water groups and to residents are on full display in this body of writing. You cannot argue or fight with the facts already presented since 2014. As you said on record at the last few Board of Water Commissioners meetings "unacceptable commentary" about water shutoffs, how people evade their bills and harped on residents receiving stimulus money etc. the past few times you have spoken is cringeworthy in its on setting. Gary, you are not qualified and maybe you should step off and appoint someone else who can build relationships with the community and trust to ensure people can have their water on and get out of debt. Your not compassionate, empathetic or even robust as a leader. You have failed in this letter to even reverse course and now work with the legal counsel to make things better for all Detroit Residents.

From reading your three-page letter sent to the NAACP Legal Counsel, you cited all of the things DWSD has done to outreach citizens for water restoration but you fight back at the claims repeating past articles that have already been established on the record. Total waste of space instead of touting what you have done and what further you need help with. You did absolutely nothing back then about the problem of water shutoffs that should be preventable now. All of those articles, past inactions have accumulated to the departments that's now out of your control to handle. Your stuck in quicksand and sinking while screaming obscenities instead of reaching out your hand to offer help and solutions.

There are too many claims to address in the letter you sent back to the NAACP Legal Counsel but just know that you are a “burden” to the residents of the city of Detroit that you shut off with no proper investigation or outreach before water is shutoff. Hydrate Detroit is very disappointed to read that there are still pushback and resistance of restoring all water service to citizens and households in Detroit. DWSD has one job and that's to turn on the water and keep it flowing to all residents and living in the city of Detroit.

1. There was a claim that some of the water shutoffs are in vacant structures.
  - a. Hydrate Detroit believes that is not possible as we have identified homes, apartment complexes, senior complexes, and vacant lots that are unoccupied that have running water in them today. There have been numerous news articles and stories posted by residents that showcases vacant structures and homes that have leaked running water and DWSD has not worked to shut them off.
  - b. Hydrate Detroit has multiple cases with “receipts” of citizens living without water for as long as three to seven years. Hydrate Detroit also receives phone calls from the United Way 211 phone system of customers unable to obtain water service if they have been unemployed or without income. We challenge your claims to be false Mr. Brown as we have brought plenty of people to your attention by way of Board of Water Commissioners Meetings and you do absolutely nothing to override or fix the issues yourself.
2. Some of the customers that have had their water shutoff, may have service restored under a different name
  - a. Hydrate Detroit has found multiple water bill accounts of customers living in previous homes and addresses but not to the same address. DWSD has a policy that prohibits customers from putting other people names on the water bill account that is not documented on the lease agreement or deed holder. Hydrate Detroit has witnessed customers transfer water service to their new addresses but have to pay back the arrears from their old previous address. If we take a look at DWSD’s website this rule is currently under their terms of service agreement.
3. The Detroit Water Crisis has been a Seven year Crisis after decades of Lax Enforcement
  - a. Hydrate Detroit have identified clients that have had water service for seven years under the following conditions
    - i. Residents had water service with no water meter readings
    - ii. Have not received any water bills or correspondence of how much to pay on water bills before 2012
    - iii. Have not been billed or accounted for by investigation of the situation. Certain owners of homes have not been identified or made responsible such as slumlords and foreign real estate speculators.
    - iv. Mass foreclosures and abandonment by banks, government entities, ghost property real estate management companies and speculators along with DWSD not aggressively going after commercial and residential property owners with the most largest debt Year to Date.
    - v. DWSD has not kept track of its customer base or have not kept track of active or inactive accounts.

- vi. DWSD targets renters and current occupiers of the property for old arrearages owed on the property. They have not investigated the true intent of the charges and whom its accounted for
  - vii. Residents have paid their bills every three months and paid on time before the system was changed in 2007 to regular monthly billing. The water rates started going up during the years of 2014 -2019 went up from 9 percent to 11 percent. Now the rate is at 14 percent and the average residential water bill is between \$80.00 per month to \$150.00 per month
4. According to the 1998 Michigan Supreme Court decision that “it is illegal to charge poor people less than people whom are not poor”
- a. This statement is referred to the Headlee Amendment and the Bolt Vs. Lansing decision in 1998. Hydrate Detroit refutes that case as the State of Michigan lawmakers have documented evidence, Detroit residents have owned the water system and set its own rates. Hydrate Detroit also make claim that this following statement is far-fetched rooted in the problem of obtaining a solution. How can you tell ratepayers of Detroit that paid their taxes into expanding the system and infrastructure for 133 municipalities “mandated through state legislation” to expand our water system into the suburbs and Detroit did not challenge this mandate. Now that the GLWA has a say in our wholesale water rates and operate our system without the vote or consent of Michiganders, this is a cop out and we must do better to form another solution to help all ratepayers and residents in the City of Detroit.

Mr. Brown you made a claim to have canvassed 9,000 residents that had their water shutoff and restored. I find that to be questionable. You have a database of addresses with multiple service interruptions and provided zero solutions. In your letter to the NAACP Legal Defense Counsel has too many issues that are very questionable in your approaches. Why be aggressive now because the Governor executive order is forcing you to look at this problem you refuse to deal with? Wayne metro cant solve it alone and neither can you. Everything you wrote in response of this letter is to be analyzed.

Hydrate Detroit questions the numbers given of outreach. We find it hard to believe that \$7,500.00 of a contract was wasted on one guy that has inflated numbers when it could have better benefitted residents to restore their water service. Hydrate Detroit also find it difficult to believe that untold millions of dollars was approved to shut off water by Homrich but there was never a plan to restore water to all residents in the first place. The city of Detroit and all entities including the water activists promoting this initiative should be ashamed of themselves because this was not a victory for all residents.

Hydrate Detroit disputes the claim of addresses being vacant.

Hydrate Detroit also disputes the claim of a small number of water turn ons

Hydrate Detroit has more outreach efforts such as the power of social media, our contact list and partners in the grassroots community to bring more people to the city to get help with their water on.

The true issue is not from households having water, as this economic downturn affects everyone, there will be more people suffering from high water bills when the pandemic is lifted. This is what we dont

want to happen. There have been efforts since the Governors Executive Order Detroit city council have sent a resolution for the Board of Water Commissioners to waive all fees, surcharges and late fees associated with past due water bills. Your responsible for making those actions come through.

Instead of you working Gary, to help residents solve their water woes, you put out this letter which clearly shows your true patterns and actions of behavioral conduct that is too much to bear for all of the city of Detroit residents who also in turn despises you in the same regard.

In conclusion, Your letter reflected more than just your frustration writing to the Legal Counsel, it showed your true feelings over the past few years about this city, our residents, the people who fight everyday for clean water access and affordable water we can all pay at a price as everyone shares this one precious resource across the region. Gary your whole letter was unwarranted and unproductive.

My suggestion to you is to issue out an apology to the NAACP Legal Defense Counsel, The residents and citizens of Detroit, The Board of Water Commissioners, The employees and personnel of Detroit Water and Sewerage Department, To Hydrate Detroit and members of the public for your meltdown. This behavior is not acceptable and will not be tolerated by any means necessary. Check yourself because you have already wrecked yourself and the crash is horrific, even for you.

Gary in closing, you must take responsibility for your actions and accountability. This is all your fault and now you have to make decisions to work with the general community. We tried it "your way" it has not worked and it has failed. Now its time for you to try things "our way" and we as the community, the experts and advocates around the water movement of Detroit have laid it out for you already. The choice is yours if you want to be proactive and work with us or face continual embarrassment.

You have brought this department to SHAME!!! And you should have if any, remorse and regret for all of the steps you missed chances taking to save Detroit and its citizens time, money and effort at stopping the water shutoffs that plagued us for over seven entire years. You were given this responsibility. Now you must own the full costs of leadership. In this whole dilemma, you failed to make even right one simple thing at attempting the bridge the gap between restoration and unification. You failed Gary, to unite people at coming to solving their water situation. You failed at uniting citizens to outreach and get help with a sincere attempt to provide quality customer service and care. That's true facts speaking about you that I hope you can learn from. This letter is to serve as your wake up call & put you in place of whom you are and what your bound to do in the duties of your job and position. You cannot continue to blame others for actions you should have done yourself. Take responsibility, eat humble Minnie Pie and accept the consequences for which you cannot control. You have to work with other groups around this and comply with us in order to help the people that have been harmed by you and these water shutoffs.

Gary, if you would like to reply to this letter, you may do so but Please do not feel the need to respond back to this letter with your vehement foul attitude, as I will not stand to see any written correspondence of you filled with disrespect and further disregard of the issues at hand presented to you. Deny and deflection will not work in your favor Mr. Brown. God don't like ugly & he sure wont like you in this manner that you been acting as of late. You let this be the last time you write an terrible rage filled letter like this. Signing off, you take care of yourself and stay safe.

**Sincerely,**

**Demeeko Williams**

**Chief Director, Hydrate Detroit**

**Electronically signed**