



# Detroit Water and Sewerage Department

735 Randolph Street  
Detroit, Michigan 48226  
(313) 224-4704 Office  
dwsd.legistar.com

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 19-0027, **Version:** 1

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The Board of Water Commissioners for the City of Detroit Water and Sewerage Department resolution **requesting a forensic investigation of the 42-inch water main break that occurred in the City of Detroit on January 12, 2019, by an engineering firm not currently on the qualified vendor list or contracted by the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department or Great Lakes Water Authority, and authorizes the Director to take such other action as may be necessary to accomplish the intent of this vote.**

### **Agenda of January 16, 2019 Item No. 19-0027**

**TO:** The Honorable  
Board of Water Commissioners  
City of Detroit, Michigan

**FROM:** Gary Brown, Director  
Water and Sewerage Department

**RE: Investigation of January 12, 2019 Water Main Break**

### **MOTION**

Upon recommendation of Gary A Brown, Director, the Board of Water Commissioners for the City of Detroit Water and Sewerage Department resolution **requesting a forensic investigation of the 42-inch water main break that occurred in the City of Detroit on January 12, 2019, by an engineering firm not currently on the qualified vendor list or contracted by the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department or Great Lakes Water Authority, and authorizes the Director to take such other action as may be necessary to accomplish the intent of this vote.**

### **BACKGROUND**

At approximately 11 p.m. on Saturday, January 12, 2019, a massive water main break occurred in a parking lot in the area (abandoned Congress Street) of St. Maron Place between Larned and Lafayette Streets. There was major flooding in the area and numerous cars were almost completely submerged under water.

Great Lakes Water Authority and DWSD crews responded to the break, which was brought under control at approximately 5 a.m. Since there was a drop in water pressure, a boil water advisory was issued for a significant portion of greater downtown Detroit. The boil water advisory was lifted Tuesday, January 15<sup>th</sup>.

The circumstances sequence of events, cause and the response to the main break require investigation. During the City Council formal session yesterday, Councilwoman Janee Ayers requested an independent investigation of the cause of the incident. DWSD Administration and

engineers believe such an investigation is warranted and recommend that this Honorable Body pass a resolution requesting such by an engineering firm that is not currently on the qualified vendor list or doing business with either DWSD or Great Lakes Water Authority.

As this Honorable Body may be aware, Macomb County Public Works Commissioner Candice Miller hired an independent engineering firm to investigate the massive sinkhole at 15 Mile and Fraser Road that opened up on Christmas Eve 2016. The firm out of Denver, Colorado determined the cause of the incident was human error and assessed liability against specific parties. A similar investigation is warranted here given the inconsistency of details regarding the incident and the amount of property damage claims that may ensue.

This resolution will be presented to the Great Lakes Water Authority Board for discussion and Director Brown will make a similar resolution request at the next GLWA Board meeting. We will keep this Honorable Body apprised of this matter.