

From: [Hydrate Detroit](#)
To: CEO@GLWATER.org
Cc: [Beulah Walker](#); [Gary Brown](#)
Subject: Letter for Public Comment: February 25, 2026
Date: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 6:05:57 PM
Attachments: [Hydrate Detroit Water Editorial GLWA Rate Increase 2-18-2026.docx](#)

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Hello i am submitting a letter to be published on the record of correspondence
to the GLWA Water Rate Increase Meeting on Wednesday
Please Publish on the Agenda
Thank you

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Water is an Essential Human Right

Water consumers in Southeast Michigan should oppose the GLWA water rate hike until issues of transparency and accountability are addressed.

By Demeeko Williams Chief Executive Director, Hydrate Detroit

As a Detroit resident and taxpayer, I always pay my water bill on time, but each time I review it, I find it to be unaffordable due to fees and rates added to the bill. I regularly attend Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) and Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) board meetings to understand how rates are set and where our money goes. Although public inquiries are discussed at DWSD meetings, rate increases continue to pose challenges for individuals facing substantial billing concerns. GLWA is now proposing significant rate hikes—up to 13%—far exceeding their first 4% cap, citing rising costs. I adamantly oppose these increases, believing they're unreasonable and ill-timed, especially given recent water main breaks in the region. Instead of more rate hikes, GLWA should reduce internal expenses, scale back capital projects, and cut unnecessary costs before passing on additional charges to residents.

Last year, Southeastern Michigan residents opposed rate increases at the GLWA public hearing, explaining how higher rates would make water and other necessities unaffordable. Water affordability is still a pressing issue in Michigan, and it cannot be resolved by simply providing funds to cover high bills. I've advocated for affordable water legislation and support to help citizens who need long-term aid.

GLWA's \$4.5 million WRAP fund, intended to support water affordability in Southeastern Michigan, has mostly benefited Detroit due to limited participation from other municipalities. With Wayne Metro insolvent, United Way out of funds, and no state budget for water affordability, GLWA has neither acted on rising needs nor taken part in efforts to address water affordability or quality issues.

GLWA has adopted strategies that gaslight, misinform, and bamboozle consumers into believing that GLWA's problems are caused by non-water-bill payment issues in certain minority communities, including Detroit, Hamtramck, Flint, and Highland Park; however, this perspective does not reflect recent developments. Highland Park has entered into a settlement agreement to ensure ongoing water service by preventing citywide disconnection. Detroit continues to address its water payment obligations through the implementation of payment plans and reduced rate options. Hamtramck has also reached a settlement agreement with GLWA regarding lead and water quality concerns, while the city of Flint is still working toward a resolution as it seeks to restore reliable access to clean Detroit Water. GLWA is still responsible for setting wholesale rates and safeguarding the region's health, safety, and welfare of its consumer class.

There are major challenges in securing funding for plumbing repairs, residential pipe-burst repairs, and infrastructure improvements, since no help is currently available from local, state, or federal sources. What measures has GLWA implemented to address this issue on a regional scale?

The biggest misconception GLWA maintains is that people are using less water, so why charge more for less water usage when you practically scared everyone into using less water, so they won't be in arrears or have water cut off? Almost everyone I talked to about this rate hike has balked at GLWA's assumption of low water usage and flow across the region.

Regionalization in Southeastern Michigan, particularly over the past 10 years under GLWA, has not helped consumers. GLWA consistently faces issues and lacks solutions, relying solely on community revenues while avoiding other funding sources and federal grants. This is not the time to ask consumers for a rate increase.

A major hope of mine is that GLWA undergoes a thorough internal forensic audit of its budget, along with performance evaluations of employees, contractors, subcontractors, and leadership. I would appreciate an update on the actions taken, details of the expenditures incurred, and an estimate of the additional resources needed to complete the project.

I'd like to share my recommendations and suggestions about the GLWA water rate increase.

- Raise the Water Affordability Fund from \$4.5 million to \$8 million or more to better assist communities facing difficulties paying their water bills. We need a boost of \$10 million dollars to remain solvent to provide assistance to other communities in need.
- Back and support the Affordable Water Now legislation currently introduced in a bipartisan effort by Democrats in the Michigan State Legislature from December 2024— Senate Bill 258-256 led by State Senator Stephanie Chang and House Bill 4555 by State House Legislative Representative Emily DievenDorf—which aims to tackle water affordability statewide by establishing a permanent water affordability fund accessible to any Michigan resident, regardless of community to prevent water shutoff disconnections and provide debt relief on eligible water bills.
- Post a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation on the GLWA website's front page outlining every capital improvement project throughout Southeast Michigan, including details about needed upgrades, associated costs, completion timelines, and a thorough cost analysis with funding requirements.
- Conduct a review of employee and contractor salaries, accompanied by an audit of their job performance and responsibilities.
- Review the \$50 Million Dollar leasing agreement between GLWA and Detroit Water and Sewerage Department and outline its roles, responsibilities, and obligations to the entire southeastern Michigan community.

Now, before anybody says, just pay your damn water bill and don't worry about it, just know that people have been paying their water bill, but just how much more can you pay before you realize the prices are rising higher and higher with no accountability and transparency. How long can you keep paying just the water bill before you're charged more for using less water? Everyone in the region is struggling with high water bills, flooded basements, and a lack of resources for repairs or debt relief.

I encourage everyone reading this article to attend the GLWA public hearing on Wednesday, February 25, 2026, at 1:00 pm, during the GLWA board meeting, held at 735 Randolph inside the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department, to voice your opposition to this rate increase. Share your stories, ask questions, and demand answers. Don't just let them approve the rate increase without your voice being recorded. The same energy people have against the AI Data Centers, DTE rate hikes, and energy and quality-of-life issues must be reflected in the same order and fashion about this water rate increase.

We the people say no more rate hikes and increases, and Hell No, we won't pay.