

# **Senior Water Systems Chemists Association (SWSCA)**

**President: K Cheeramvelil**

**Recording Secretary: Rasiklal Patel**

**Vice President Ursula Gray**

**Financial Secretary: Tevin Gripper**

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The Senior Water System Chemists Association (SWSCA) is demanding that the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) Board reconsider its vote repudiating the contract agreed to between the union negotiating team, and the GLWA negotiating team composed of attorneys Cheryl Yapo and James Allen, and Human Resources representatives Terri Conerway and Karen Darty.

Specifically, we are asking that the Board reconsider its refusal to agree to the Memorandum of Understanding regarding the “Rollover into Base Salary of the \$1 per hour Adjustment for Personnel Required to Work On-site during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

This Memorandum of Understanding, proposed by the GLWA negotiating team, states:

“Whereas the Parties have faced unprecedented circumstances amid the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in March 2020 and are continuing to do so:”

“Whereas GLWA wishes to recognize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on SWSCA members and further recognize their dedication to continually providing water of unquestionable quality to the community;”

“Now, Therefore the Parties, to promote continuous peaceful and harmonious labor relations, agree as follows:

1. Upon execution of this Memorandum of Understanding, SWSCA operational personnel who have been required to work on-site since March 16, 2020 shall receive a \$1 increase to their hourly wage.
2. The Memorandum of Agreement into by the Parties on March 17, 2020 providing for a \$1 per hour pay enhancement for personnel required to work on-site is no longer in

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effect and deemed null and void.” This agreement shall be without precedent and

SWSCA agrees not to cite or reference this Memorandum of Agreement in any other matter or proceeding, except as to its enforcement or application.”

The SWSCA has always led the way in amicable collective bargaining with the GLWA. We are generally the first union to reach agreement with the GLWA on reasonable terms for both sides.

Many of our members are older workers, who have worked as chemists for years for the GLWA and DWSD previously, in a job that pays below the salary for comparable chemists in the private sector.

We have been proud to serve the public. We have played no small part in achieving the high-quality water delivered by the Detroit water system, avoiding catastrophes like the one that occurred in Flint that was so disastrous for its population.

We have continued to diligently perform our jobs during the COVID 19 crisis, with a minimum of hazard pay relative to other workers for the City of Detroit. This is even though there have been numerous studies on the particular dangers we have faced due to the potential transmission of COVID 19 into the wastewater which we diligently treat.

3. We presumed the GLWA negotiators proposed and entered the Memorandum and Understanding in good faith as duly designated representatives of the GLWA. The Memorandum was arrived at in the process of collective bargaining in exchange for the union sacrificing other demands in exchange for the one- time performance enhancement in our salary for service well-performed during the pandemic. Based on the good faith representations of the GLWA.

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- negotiating team, we presented the contract for ratification by our members, who approved it overwhelmingly.
4. How are our members supposed to react to the Board inexplicably renegeing on a specific Memorandum of Understanding, proposed by its own representatives, in recognition of our service? It is a slap to our members and will have a poisonous effect on future relations if the board does not rescind its disapproval. We will pursue every avenue at our disposal, including Unfair Labor Charges in front of PERA, if this unconscionable move is not dealt with.
  5. We further note that the rescission of this Memorandum of Understanding comes at the precise moment when the GLWA received \$103 million in cash flow savings because of favorable interest rate reductions due in part to the COVID crisis.
  6. We demand that the Board take immediate action to reinstate the Memorandum of Understanding providing for the rollover into base salary of the \$1 COVID-19 pay adjustment.

Sincerely

Kuriakose Cheeramvelil

Chemist

President SWSCA.

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Great Lakes water Authority, 2727 Second Ave, PO Box-72, Detroit, MI 48201

Association of Professional Chemists working on drinking and Wastewater recovery operations.