



Legislation Text

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WATER RESIDENTIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PRESENTATION REGARDING PROGRAM CHANGES PROPOSED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Agenda of: January 23, 2019

Item No.: **2019-022**

Amount: N/A

TO: The Honorable
Board of Directors
Great Lakes Water Authority

FROM: Sue F. McCormick
Chief Executive Officer
Great Lakes Water Authority

DATE: January 23, 2019

RE: WATER RESIDENTIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PRESENTATION REGARDING PROGRAM CHANGES PROPOSED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MOTION

Upon recommendation of Nicolette N. Bateson, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer, The Board of Directors (Board) of the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA), **receive and file the presentation from Wayne Metro regarding the Water Residential Assistance Program changes proposed by the GLWA Board of Directors;** and authorizes the CEO to take such other action as may be necessary to accomplish the intent of this vote.

BACKGROUND

The Water Residential Assistance Program ("WRAP") provides sustainable funding for qualifying low-income residents served by the Great Lakes Water Authority's ("GLWA") customers. The program is funded by GLWA at an amount equal to 0.5 percent of budgeted revenues with the budgeted FY 2019 funding level of \$4.9 million combined for water and

sewer services.

The scope of funding uses includes a) payment assistance and b) water audit and water conservation measures. Eligible residential customers with a past due bill and/or who are in active shut off can receive assistance with paying down arrears and receive \$25 toward monthly bill payment assistance annually up to \$1,000. High volume water users can receive a one-time home audit and home water conservation services up to \$1,000. Maximum annual assistance per household is \$2,000. To participate in WRAP, an applicant must have household gross incomes at or below 150% of the federal poverty income thresholds. Customers with water usage at or above 120% of the average residential usage are eligible to participate in a water audit and install water conservation measures. WRAP participants are also encouraged to participate in both financial coaching and water conservation workshops as well as other support services. The program is administered by Wayne Metro Community Action Agency ("Wayne Metro"), a nonprofit agency.

The WRAP began providing assistance to residents in the GLWA service area on March 1, 2016 and to date has committed over \$7.5 million in assistance and conservation funds to qualified WRAP participants. WRAP has the potential to serve over 100 communities within the GLWA service area, but in order to assist qualified households, each community must opt into the program and sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Wayne Metro. To date, 76 communities have opted into WRAP.

The current budgeted WRAP allocations for FY 2019 are attached separately as Appendix A.

JUSTIFICATION

At its meeting on October 24, 2018, the GLWA Board of Directors ("Board") developed a list of seven proposed program changes to WRAP. The seven proposed program changes are as follows:

- 1) Eliminate or extend two-year time limitation for participation
 - A) Extend the two-year time limitation only for:
 - i) Senior Citizens
 - ii) Disabled Citizens
 - B) Allow communities to elect the time limitation for participants within their borders
- 2) Increase amount of monthly bill assistance for participants without an arrearage
- 3) Reduce complexities for community participants
- 4) Allocate available unused funds for direct marketing to target populations
- 5) Allow renters to use conservation dollars without requiring prior landlord approval
- 6) Change the definition of poverty level to increase the population that will be eligible to participate in the WRAP program
- 7) Condition waiver of two-year limitation or increase in monthly bill support on completion of conservation audit and necessary repairs

The Board requested that Wayne Metro prepare analysis on the proposed changes and to present its recommendations to the Board at a subsequent Board meeting. Today's presentation by Wayne Metro is the requested response and recommendations for the proposed program changes.

BUDGET IMPACT

There is no budget impact for the WRAP program changes included in the Wayne Metro presentation.

COMMITTEE REVIEW

None. This matter is presented as request of the Board as a whole.