

RESOLUTION 2023-408
REGARDING WATER AFFORDABILITY BILLS

By Board Member Jaye Quadrozzi:

WHEREAS, the Michigan Senate has introduced a package of legislation, (Senate Bill 0549 – Senate Bill 0554) designed to support water affordability and collectively referred to in this Resolution as “the Water Affordability Bills”; and

WHEREAS, the Michigan House of Representatives introduced a similar package of bills (House Bill 5088 – House Bill 5093) designed to support water affordability and collectively referred to in this Resolution as “the Water Affordability Bills”; and

WHEREAS, the Water Affordability Bills are the product of extensive dialogue and detailed discussions between water utilities, affordability advocates, and other stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, GLWA staff participated in and served as a resource to support these discussions; and

WHEREAS, the Water Affordability Bills reflect a desire by Members of the Michigan Legislature to advance water affordability while considering the needs of retail water providers, water consumers, and Michigan communities; and

WHEREAS, GLWA is a wholesale water provider which limits the direct impact of the bills on its operations; and

WHEREAS, GLWA’s founding documents reflect a commitment to water affordability through the establishment of the WRAP (Water Residential Assistance Program) the first water affordability program in Michigan; and

WHEREAS, GLWA’s Board of Directors has repeatedly demonstrated its commitment to water affordability through its support and expansion of WRAP benefits to include for eligible households:

- An income-based plan designed to limit the cost of the residential water and sewer to 3% of household income,

- Arrearage payment assistance,
- a healthy home initiative with plumbing repairs and replacement of lead-based fixtures in the kitchen, bathroom, and utility room,
- An emphasis on direct client assistance and case management to support a holistic approach to the household's needs by delivering this program through service delivery partners who are leaders in community action agency and nonprofit human services,
- "Wrapfinity" to provide households with a senior citizen or person with permanent disabilities being eligible to receive bill credits without an expiration date;
- provides funding to support the Detroit Water & Sewerage Department's Lifeline Program, and

WHEREAS, in developing and refining the WRAP concept, GLWA and its Board of Directors have provided flexibility so that WRAP funding could be maximized to support local community interests; and

WHEREAS, GLWA recognizes that different communities within the GLWA service area have unique and local perspectives that may affect their position on the water affordability legislation; and

WHEREAS, GLWA urges its member partner communities to review and develop their own perspectives, on the Water Affordability Bills and communicate that perspective to their elected representatives in Lansing; and

WHEREAS, GLWA is prepared to further support the water affordability conversation amongst regional stakeholders through its member outreach process,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the Board of Directors for the Great Lakes Water Authority expresses its support for the Water Affordability Bills (Michigan Senate Bills 0549 – 0554 and Michigan House Bills 5088 – 5093).
2. That the Board of Directors for the Great Lakes Water Authority urges its member partner communities to develop their own perspectives, on the Water Affordability Bills and communicate that perspective to their elected representatives in Lansing; and
3. That the Board of Directors for the Great Lakes Water Authority requests that staff take appropriate action to communicate the Board's action through this resolution outlining the Great Lakes Water Authority's support for the water affordability bills including providing copies of this resolution and participating in legislative hearings and processes related to the water affordability bills.