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**GREAT LAKES WATER AUTHORITY LAUNCHES ROUGE RIVER OUTFALL;
IMPLEMENTATION WILL IMPROVE WATER QUALITY IN ROUGE RIVER AS WELL
AS PUBLIC HEALTH**

New outfall ensures all discharges from WRRF into the Rouge River are treated and disinfected

DETROIT— The Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA), Michigan’s largest drinking water and wastewater treatment service provider, has successfully launched its Rouge River Outfall Disinfection Facility (RRO). The new RRO ensures every drop of water discharged into the Rouge River from GLWA’s Water Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF) is entirely screened, treated and disinfected – improving water quality in the river and helping to protect public health.

GLWA operates what is called a combined sewer system, meaning the system collects not only water flushed down toilets and drains, but also everything that runs into storm drains throughout the system. All this water flows to GLWA’s WRRF, where it is treated and disinfected. However, combined sewer systems often experience capacity issues after heavy wet weather events, such as rainstorms and snow melts, causing extremely high volumes of flow to the WRRF, which had previously resulted in some of the wet weather flows getting to the Rouge River without receiving any disinfection.

The new RRO, which began operation on March 29, 2019, addresses what had been GLWA’s single largest annual point of discharge of treated, but nondisinfected wet weather flows. The operation of this new facility ensures disinfection of that treated water, killing any bacteria present before it is discharged into the Rouge River. Prior to the new RRO becoming operational, between 4,000-15,000 million gallons of treated water had been discharged into the Rouge River without disinfection annually.

“The completion of the RRO is another example of GLWA’s commitment to operating in a sustainable way,” said Sue F. McCormick, Chief Executive Officer, GLWA. “Our top priority is water quality, no matter if it is on the water or wastewater side of our operations. I am proud that our team not only found an effective, environmentally-friendly solution, but also one that uses existing infrastructure and saves GLWA and its member partners more than \$250 million in potential costs.”

The RRO was originally scoped as an approximately \$300 million project in Fiscal Year 2010. However, its design was re-imagined twice to not only reduce public investment to approximately \$44 million, but also improve water quality.

The disinfection agent being used in the RRO is sodium hypochlorite (commonly known as bleach). However, before the discharge is released into the river, any residual of the sodium hypochlorite will be removed by a dose of sodium bisulfite, which is non-harmful to the environment.

“The continued successful operation of the RRO means that both the wildlife of the Rouge River and the people of Wayne County will benefit,” said Navid Mehram, Chief Operating Officer, Wastewater Operating Services, GLWA. “The added disinfection will remove any harmful bacteria in the discharge, lessening public health risks; and, the disinfecting process will not release any harmful chemicals into the ecosystem of the river. It’s a win-win situation.”

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) has monitored and provided guidance on the RRO project throughout its implementation. According to Phil Argiroff, Assistant Division Director, EGLE – Water Resources Division (WRD), “The completion of the RRO Project helps provide important public health protection in the Rouge River by disinfecting all wet weather flow treated at the GLWA WRRF. EGLE-WRD appreciates GLWA’s innovative reuse of facilities to accomplish this requirement on time and cost effectively.”

For more information on the Authority, please visit www.glwater.org.

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About the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA)

The Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) is the provider of choice for water and wastewater services to 127 municipalities in eight southeast Michigan counties. With the Great Lakes as source water, the GLWA is uniquely positioned to provide its customers water of unquestionable quality. GLWA has capacity to extend its service to other southeast Michigan communities. The authority offers a Water Residential Assistance Program (WRAP) to assist low-income residential customers throughout the system. The GLWA board includes one representative each from Oakland, Macomb and Wayne counties as well as two representatives from the City of Detroit, and one appointed by the governor of Michigan to represent customer communities outside the tri-county area.