

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GREAT LAKES WATER AUTHORITY DEVELOPS UNIQUE COLLABORATION WITH A NEWLY CREATED DRAINAGE DISTRICT IN OAKLAND COUNTY AND THE CITY OF DETROIT TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY BY REMOVING WET WEATHER DISCHARGES INTO LOCAL WATERWAYS

- *Projects mark first tangible outcome of GLWA's recently adopted 40-year wastewater management plan prioritizing lower cost, high-impact projects that protect water quality and public health, contribute to economic prosperity, and preserve the environment*
- *Agreements with Oakland County's Evergreen-Farmington Sanitary Drain Drainage District and the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department prioritize three projects over the next five years*
- *Combined, the three projects will eliminate 48 million gallons of untreated wet weather discharge from flowing into the Rouge River each year*

DETROIT— The Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) today announced the first tangible example of regional thinking that has occurred as a result of its recently completed [Wastewater Master Plan](#) (WWMP), a 40-year regional roadmap to proactively and adaptively manage the wastewater system and provide a path to affordability through partnerships and collaborations. GLWA, Oakland County and the city of Detroit will work together, across municipal and county boundaries, on three projects that will protect public health by reducing wet weather discharges into regional waterways.

The collaboration came together during GLWA's WWMP planning process, as discussions were being conducted about the need for a regional focus on reducing combined sewer and sanitary sewer discharges into our waterways during wet weather events.

As a result of the memorandum of understandings (MOUs) among the three entities:

- The Evergreen-Farmington Sanitary Drain Drainage District (EFSD), a regional sewer service district that collects sanitary sewage operated by the Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner (WRC), secures additional wet weather flow capacity in the regional wastewater system to complete its 30-year plan for improving the water quality of the Rouge River. As a result of this additional capacity, EFSD will not only improve system reliability, but will also avoid the cost of constructing a new wet weather treatment facility, as well as costs from its long-term operations and maintenance;
- To offset this additional flow into the regional wastewater system, the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) and GLWA will each undertake their own projects:
 - DWSD is implementing its Far West Detroit Stormwater Improvement Project which was identified in 2017 as part of its green stormwater infrastructure program. The project will improve sewer flow and capacity by removing stormwater within the right-of-way from the combined sewer

- pipes. This will be done by installing sewers that move stormwater through two new green stormwater infrastructure projects in Rouge Park. The filtered stormwater will discharge directly into the Rouge River, rather than flowing to the Water Resource Recovery Facility. As a result, the outcomes are expected to improve DWSD's service delivery as well as reduce street flooding and the potential for basement backups in the Far West Detroit neighborhood;
- GLWA will accelerate the undertaking of a two-part improvement project at its West Warren combined sewer outfall location in Detroit, ahead of schedule, that will correct wet weather discharges from this location and bring it into compliance with its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. The project includes constructing a new diversion weir chamber west of the Rouge River and increasing the size of an existing 18-inch diameter pipe to a 54-inch pipe east of the Rouge River.

Combined, these projects will prevent an estimated 48 million gallons of wet weather flow per year from making its way into the Rouge River untreated.

“The MOUs between GLWA, EFSD and DWSD bring to life the regional thinking that was so prominent in our Wastewater Master Plan,” said Suzanne Coffey, chief planning officer, GLWA. “This is truly a unique solution to reduce untreated overflows in Oakland County and in the city of Detroit. This opportunity has rightfully given way to our new motto ‘cleaner water, faster and cheaper’ and is a direct result of unprecedented regional collaboration.”

When completed, the three projects will provide incredible environmental benefit, across county lines, for the \$68 million total investment.

“Preserving safe, reliable water, sewer and storm drain systems is extremely important for our region,” said Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner Jim Nash, who serves as chairperson of the drainage district. “We are now thinking differently and working together to protect the public health and natural resources of all our residents. The Evergreen-Farmington Sanitary Drain project is a lasting example of regional collaboration at its finest. The MOU shows that we’re working across county lines to discover a single solution to address multiple regional concerns.”

Ultimately, by coordinating these projects across communities, it allows for a collaborative approach to maximize the investment value, achieving an overall cost savings for the region, providing significant environmental benefit and securing increased system reliability.

DWSD's project will begin in the summer of this year, following the selection and approval of a contractor. GLWA's project will start after the completion of DWSD's project. Oakland County's project has a planned start of the summer of next year.

“We have been planning the Far West Detroit Stormwater Improvement Project for three years in an effort to continue our work in reducing untreated combined sewer overflows to our rivers,” said Palencia Mobley, P.E., deputy director and chief engineer, DWSD. “The partnership with GLWA and Oakland County is beneficial for the City and region at-large. And, like we have been doing the last five years under our current leadership, we will continue engaging and gathering input from the community in all phases of the project.”

For more information on GLWA, 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 drinking water services to nearly 40 percent, and efficient and effective wastewater services to nearly 30 percent, of Michigan’s population. With the Great Lakes as source water, GLWA is uniquely positioned to provide those it serves with water of unquestionable quality. GLWA also has the capacity to extend its services beyond its 88 member partner communities. As part of its commitment to water affordability, the Authority offers a Water Residential Assistance Program to assist low-income households in participating member communities throughout the system. GLWA’s board includes one representative each from Oakland, Macomb and Wayne counties, two representatives from the city of Detroit, and one appointed by the Michigan governor to represent member partner communities outside of the tri-county area.

About the Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner’s Office

The Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner’s Office is dedicated to protecting public health and safety, preserving natural resources and a healthy environment, maintaining reliable, high quality service, ensuring the value of investment and contributing to economic prosperity. We set goals that encourage efforts to meet or exceed local, state and federal water quality standards, environmental regulations and safety requirements within our control. To learn more about us, visit www.oakgov.com/water.

About the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department

The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) serves more than 230,000 accounts that includes a residential population of nearly 700,000. DWSD’s water system consists of more than 2,700 miles of water main and 30,000-plus fire hydrants, and the combined sewer collection system has nearly 3,000 miles of sewer piping, more than 90,000 catch basins and 16 green stormwater infrastructure projects within the city of Detroit. Beginning in June 2019, DWSD embarked on a five-year, \$500 million program to begin to address the aging infrastructure, including replacing lead service lines. To learn more about DWSD or to request water services, make payments, enroll in assistance programs, or report water or sewer emergencies, call DWSD Customer Care at 313-267-8000, use the Improve Detroit mobile app, or visit [DWSD online](#).



GLWA Media Contact:

Ashleigh Chatel

313-324-7867

ashleigh.chatel@fleishman.com

WRC Media Contact:

Trisha Bruzek

248-494-6826

bruzekp@oakgov.com

DWSD Media Contact:

Bryan Peckinpaugh

313-410-2954

bryan.peckinpaugh@detroitmi.gov