



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**GREAT LAKES WATER AUTHORITY INCREASING SYSTEM RESILIENCY
WITH IMPROVEMENTS TO 14 MILE WATER TRANSMISSION MAIN**

- *Pipe renewal extends the pipe segment's service life by as much as 50 years*
- *GLWA and its member partners collaborated on plan to ensure continued protection of public health and safety*
- *Construction to be completed by mid-January with no anticipated impact on water quality*

DETROIT— The Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) announced today it is continuing to build resiliency into its regional system by proactively renewing segments within a 1.5-mile stretch of water transmission main along 14 Mile Road in Oakland County, adding as much as 50 years to its service life.

On October 31, 2021, a break occurred in a 20-foot section of GLWA's 48-inch transmission main that runs along 14 Mile Road near Drake Road in Farmington Hills. Immediately after isolating the break and dewatering the pipe, GLWA took the initiative to proactively conduct an extensive physical inspection of the out-of-service segment of pipe. The inspection identified 18 sections of at-risk pipe within the 1.5 miles that require strengthening, including one section that was in an advanced state of deterioration.

After extensive discussion with GLWA's member partner communities directly impacted by the break, it was determined that the most prudent course of action to protect public health and safety would be to extend the timeline for the repair of the original break to include the renewal work identified in the inspection. GLWA will also install two new valves along the 1.5-mile segment of pipe, which will provide the Authority with additional operational flexibility to help maintain levels of service to member partner communities serviced by this transmission main.

"Ensuring resiliency in the regional system is one of GLWA's top priorities," said Suzanne Coffey, Interim Chief Executive Officer, GLWA. "Taking a proactive approach to asset renewal, wherever possible, is always our goal. However, we understand we must balance this with our commitment to maintaining a high level of service to our member partners. The repair and renewal work being done here is the perfect example of this balance. I am thankful for the outstanding collaboration we have had with our member partners, stakeholders and fellow utilities, and appreciate the patience of those residents who have been inconvenienced due to the continuing work. I am especially grateful to our member partners from the City of Farmington Hills, West Bloomfield Township, and the Oakland County Water Resources Commissioners Office for their collaboration and commitment to doing whatever it takes, alongside GLWA, to keep the water flowing for everyone. A particular shout out to West Bloomfield Township for their willingness to open emergency valves, which has been pivotal in maintaining service to communities west of the break."

The renewal work will be done with an innovative pipe strengthening technology called V-Wrap.

“V-Wrap involves the installation of thin layers of carbon fiber impregnated with an epoxy resin,” said Mike Higgins, Business Class Director, Condition Assessment & Rehabilitation, HDR, GLWA’s contractor for the repair. “Essentially, the repair becomes a pipe within the pipe. The carbon fibers are woven to form a fabric which is impregnated with epoxy. Once it cures, the structure is very strong and the original pipe is no longer needed to resist the water pressure in the pipe and other loading.”

In addition to the pipe renewal work being conducted, GLWA will also install a structural monitoring system called Acoustic Fiber Optic (or AFO) cable in over six miles of the 14 Mile transmission main, including the 1.5-mile segment, in January. This cable will provide GLWA with the ability to “listen” to pipe conditions. The benefit is if a section of pipe starts to approach failure, GLWA will be notified so it can plan proactive pipe repair or replacement, if necessary. The installation of AFO is a pilot program that, after evaluation, GLWA may choose to install elsewhere in the system.

“The work we are doing to effectuate the repairs to this main break, as well as to extend the service life of the 18 at-risk pipe segments within the 1.5 mile stretch of water main in Farmington Hills is critically important,” said Cheryl Porter, Chief Operating Officer-Water & Field Services, GLWA. “However, just as important, is the work we are doing simultaneously, as part of GLWA’s Capital Improvement Plan, to construct a seven-mile-long north-south pipeline loop. The [14 Mile Road Transmission Main Loop](#) will drastically improve redundancy to this portion of GLWA’s service area and include a parallel pipeline to the existing 14 Mile Transmission Main between the Authority’s Haggerty Pump Station and Decker Road. This pipeline, which is underway, will be completed in early 2024. It will allow GLWA to serve the area at a normal level of service in case of an interruption caused by a main break or other necessary repair.”

The Authority collaborated with all of the impacted member partner communities to develop this resiliency improvement plan. With full alignment and input from the communities, the work received their full support and is currently underway. It is expected that work will be completed by mid-January.

“The work being done at the water main break in Farmington Hills is a testament to regional collaboration at its finest,” said Jim Nash, Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner. “Efforts being put forth by all parties involved demonstrates how important it is to work together on solutions that continuously rehabilitate and improve the water infrastructure throughout Oakland County and Southeast Michigan. Being proactive and identifying areas of opportunity like this is a critical first step.”

GLWA will continue to provide updates and communicate with its member partners and the public for the duration of the work. While additional service disruptions are not expected, out of an abundance of caution, GLWA has put measures in place to mitigate additional risks while repair/renewal work is underway. Those include:

- Adding staff to the Franklin Pump Station and making a System Technician available to respond to Haggerty Pump Station;
- Closely monitoring the Franklin, Haggerty, Adams, and Newburgh Pump Stations to respond immediately from the GLWA Systems Control Center;
- Coordinating closely with DTE Energy regarding the criticality of the power supply to the three adjacent pump stations;

- Postponing work in water system pumping facilities supplying water to this area, and temporarily delaying three CIP projects, all in an effort to reduce potential impacts to water service to this area.

It is important to note that throughout this repair process, impacted communities will continue to have water service at the level they have been experiencing since the main broke.

“A water main break is never an ideal situation and a break of this magnitude is especially challenging,” said Karen Mondora, Director of Public Services for the City of Farmington Hills. “However, I appreciate the transparency in sharing information in real-time, and the fact that GLWA has sought input from its member partners every step along the way. It is important to know that our concerns and challenges are not only heard, but truly considered. The Authority’s response to this situation is an excellent example of its commitment to shared decision making.”

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.