



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Wayne County Circuit Court Orders the City of Highland Park to Pay
the Great Lakes Water Authority**

DETROIT – The Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) has received the Wayne County Circuit Court’s opinion and order of Tuesday, May 10, 2022, and while we continue our review, given its importance we want to express our pleasure at the depth and the clarity of the court’s reasoning. The City of Highland Park stopped making payments to GLWA, asserting that its payments were capped by 1996 agreements; the court rejected that argument and made clear that Highland Park’s payment obligation is not limited to 1996 levels and its decision to cease making escrow payments to GLWA based upon its interpretation of prior court orders was incorrect.

The Court held that “Highland Park’s liabilities under the 1996 Agreements are not capped at the amount those agreements required Highland Park to escrow.” The court states in its opinion, “the Court finds that GLWA has established beyond factual and legal dispute that Highland Park breached its escrow obligations under the 1996 settlement agreements, and that: (1) GLWA is entitled to a judgment representing 65% of Highland Park’s water and sewer revenue to GLWA for every month it has not deposited such funds into the parties’ escrow account; and (2) Highland Park is hereby ordered to continue making such deposits until this Court rules otherwise.”

As we have maintained throughout this litigation, an examination of the merits of the case clearly indicates that Highland Park is obligated to pay and is deficient in paying for the water and sewer services it receives from GLWA. In making this comment, we are not reflecting on the residents of Highland Park who pay their bills, but Highland Park’s administration who has chosen to use litigation to postpone these inevitable payment obligations.

We again encourage Highland Park to come to the table and enter into a meaningful, full, and final resolution of these issues. As the court also stated in its order, GLWA may move for contempt sanctions, “if Highland Park does not comply with its ruling within 21 days.”

Litigation has gone on now for almost a decade, and we look to the state of Michigan to provide leadership and assistance so that this issue may be resolved in a manner that provides long-term sustainability for the system.

While this is a big step forward, it is not a final order, and we will continue to pursue full recovery of amounts due from Highland Park and manage this case through its final resolution.

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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.