

City of Detroit


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DENZEL ANTON MCCAMPBELL COUNCIL MEMBER, DISTRICT 7

MEMORANDUM

TO: Gary Brown, Director
Detroit Water and Sewerage Department

THRU: Council President James Tate

FROM: Council Member Denzel Anton McCampbell 

DATE: March 18, 2026

RE: FY27 Budget Hearing Follow Up – Detroit Water and Sewerage Department

Thank you again for your time and for the presentation during the recent hearing. We appreciate the Department's willingness to walk through current operations and respond to council questions. As a follow-up, I have a few additional questions so I can better understand some of the issues discussed on the record and areas that may come up in future policy discussions.

- 1) How many Detroit households are currently behind on their water bills, and how does that number compare to the last three fiscal years?
- 2) Cities like Philadelphia caps water bills based on income. Does Detroit plan to adopt a similar system-wide affordability model? If not, please explain why.
- 3) Similarly, Philadelphia has reduced flooding through green infrastructure. What comparable investments is Detroit making to reduce basement flooding?
- 4) How much revenue does DWSD collect annually from late fees, penalties, and reconnection fees. How is that broken up between Detroit residents and commercial businesses?
- 5) What percentage of Detroit households are paying more than the EPA waster affordability threshold for water and sewer services (3% to 4.5% of household income)?
- 6) How much of Detroit's water and sewer infrastructure is past its expected lifespan, and what percentage of the system is scheduled for replacement in the next five years?
- 7) What specific investments in this budget reduce basement flooding risk, and how will residents see measurable improvements?
- 8) Which Detroit neighborhoods are most vulnerable to sewer overflows or stormwater backups, and what targeted infrastructure work is planned for those areas?
- 9) What upgrades are being planned to handle more storm and runoff water as climate change drastically increases the amount of rainwater we receive during storms?
- 10) How much of DWSD's operating and capital budget goes to outside contractors, and what work could realistically be brought in-house?

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- 11) How often does DWSD conduct audits of contractors responsible for infrastructure maintenance and repairs? What are the consequences of failing an audit?
- 12) What percentage of DWSD employees live in Detroit, and how has that changed over the last five years?
- 13) What training or apprenticeship programs exist to bring Detroit residents into skilled water infrastructure jobs?
- 14) Are there barriers in the hiring process that prevent Detroit residents from accessing DWSD jobs, particularly in skilled trades?
- 15) How much debt does DWSD currently carry, and how much of the annual budget goes to debt service rather than infrastructure improvements?

Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you have any questions. Thank you.

Cc: Honorable Detroit City Council
Louise Jones, City Clerk's Office
Malik Washington, Director of City Government Affairs