



● FAILING DRINKING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

● In Michigan — a state surrounded by 80 percent of our nation’s fresh surface water — communities have every right to believe their drinking water is clean and safe.

● Unfortunately, decades of disinvestment in our drinking water infrastructure continues to put communities in harm’s way. Although the legislature has passed some drinking water reforms since the Flint Water Crisis, the fact remains that rural and urban communities require more investment to ensure their drinking water is safe from toxic metals, PFAS, and other contaminants.

Unsafe to Drink

About half of all Michiganders get their drinking water from a Great Lake or connected channel, with the other half getting their water from groundwater systems and private wells.

Threats to our water include shut-offs due to toxic algal blooms and harmful nitrates, contaminated water from aging lead pipes, and groundwater contaminated by industrial pollution. Safe drinking water is critical to Michigan’s public health and economic vitality. While the United States’ drinking water remains among the safest in the world, we still face a growing array of challenges that, if left unaddressed, can pose serious risks to public health and our economy.

Underinvesting

According to Business Leaders for Michigan, Michigan spends \$90 less per capita than the national average on critical drinking water infrastructure. As a result, Michigan’s water infrastructure is aging and has become increasingly unsafe. Not only does the American Society of Civil Engineers estimate that over 80% of Detroit’s drinking water infrastructure was built in the 1940s, but the American Water Works Association estimates that there are still 460,000 lead service lines in Michigan - more than almost any other state.

As a result of chronic underinvestment, Michigan’s water infrastructure has consistently been graded poorly by the American Society of Civil Engineers. In 2018, our water systems were given an average grade of ‘D’.

Growing Our Economy

According to the EPA, over the next 20 years, Michigan will need a \$13.8 billion investment in our drinking water infrastructure. An investment of this size would not only protect our state's public health, it would also provide over 90,000 well-paying jobs to Michigan residents. In light of the COVID-19 crisis, during which some of Michigan's most vulnerable residents have been left without a reliable source of clean water and thousands of jobs were lost in the economic downturn, investing in our drinking water infrastructure is a perfect opportunity to invest in the well-being of our state.



Actions Needed To Address Failing Drinking Water Infrastructure

- Design and implement water rate structures that prevent water shutoffs and make water affordable for low-income communities.
- Implement a “Filter First” approach to public drinking water sources, especially in our schools and daycare centers. The Filter First method, detailed in SB 589 and 590, would require all schools and daycare centers to install filtration systems at every drinking water source. This bill would ensure that schools are proactively protecting children’s drinking water instead of our current, retroactive testing program.
- Protect the new Lead & Copper Rule by providing adequate funding for its implementation.
- Enact legislation that enables municipalities to develop storm water utilities to reduce the flow of harmful nutrients and bacteria into our water from urban and suburban sources.
- Identify sustainable funding for water quality infrastructure maintenance and upgrades while mitigating any potential price impacts on low-income families through the creation of affordable rate structures.
- Protect sources of funding for the remediation of sites that contaminate groundwater drinking supplies or pose an imminent threat to groundwater drinking supplies, like the Michigan Bottle Bill.