



Flint Water Crisis---DRAFT SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY CONCERNS

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

A recent community meeting hosted by the Flint NAACP branch surfaced multiple community concerns and demands. One Flint resident reflected on the relationship between many African American communities and law enforcement in the context of the trauma of seeing flashing lights and armed forces in their communities, albeit bearing water. He stated, "If I open my door when they come and take out my cell phone, they might shoot me because they think it's a gun!" Others agreed and there was consensus that it would be ideal to shift the money spent on transporting and housing National Guard persons to providing local jobs to youth and others for water distribution. A woman, with tearful emotion, described her blended family where her stepson lives in Detroit and she and her husband are supposed to have him on the weekends. Since this water crisis arose, her stepson's mother refuses to send him to Flint which, as she said, is tearing their hearts out, though they make adjustments at great expense to go and stay at a hotel in Detroit to be near him when they can. Others spoke of the injustice of the combination of 65% rate hikes for water that have occurred over the past 2 years and having to pay at all for water they can barely use. One person gave an example of an earlier stage in the crisis when she tried to take a shower and her skin was burning saying, "And I'm supposed to pay for that??" We also heard demands for replacing infrastructure and ensuring that the pipefitting and other jobs go to local people. Most stridently, we heard the need for a return to democracy by repealing the Emergency Financial Manager Law, under which the string of decisions were made that brought Flint to this crisis.

CROSSCUTTING PRINCIPLES

Recognizing that an effective and lasting action plan must be comprehensive, multisector, and include short term mitigation goals as well as long term redevelopment planning, the NAACP emphasizes that the action must be undergirded by the following principles that are essential to advancing an agenda that upholds civil and human rights:

- 1) Equity and Justice**
- 2) Self-Governance/Democracy**
- 3) Inclusiveness**
- 4) Transparency**
- 5) Accountability**

COMMUNITY 15-POINT PRIORITIES

(List is not in order of importance or sequence of action)

- 1) Emergency Financial Manager Law Must Be Repealed:** Dissolve any/and all oversight appointments which negate the authority of the elected mayor of the City of Flint, the Honorable Dr. Karen Weaver and support the efforts of the Mayor she moves forward in overseeing the business of the city.
- 2) Water Distribution by National Guard Must Be Replaced by Local Youth Labor:** Supervised students be given this opportunity to receive minimum wages for delivering water to homes during daylight hours as well as collecting and recycling the extensive water bottle waste that will result.
- 3) Access to Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Must Be Accessible for All Residents:** In the short term, to mitigate the damage of lead in human systems, all residents must have access to fresh fruits and vegetables. For the long term the city should have institutionalized access to fresh fruits and vegetables through preferably locally owned grocers/farmers markets.
- 4) All Flint Citizens Must Be Provided Free Home Inspections:** Free city-wide home inspections for citizens of Flint must be conducted to determine the extent of damage and estimated cost of repair or replacement for pipes, plumbing or water tanks damage due to corrosion.

- 5) **All Flint Residents Must Be Provided Federal Funded Replacement of Damaged Systems/Appliances:** There must be federally funded replacement of plumbing systems and/or water tanks or any other appliance i.e. refrigerator with ice makers, etc., which may have been damaged as a result of the water crisis.
- 6) **Fairness/Justice Must Be Examined in Rate Hikes and Continued Billing for Poisonous Water:** Provide immediate relief for the citizens by lowering and/or providing water credits to a more reasonable level for citizens of Flint who are experiencing some of the highest water bill rates in the country while some of the most toxic water in the country flows from the taps while over 40% of the households are below the poverty line.
- 7) **The City of Flint Must Have A New, State of the Art, Water Distribution System:** Build of a state-of-the-art infrastructure water distribution system to also include damaged pipes from the city street/curbs leading into the homes of the citizens of the City of Flint.
- 8) **Pro-Bono Legal Advice Must Be Available to All:** Provide free legal guidance and support residents engaged in cases from custody issues surrounding parental rights when the home is deemed unsafe by another parent to future cases with people engaged in crimes due to effects of lead on behavior or children whose future is truncated due to learning problems.
- 9) **Investigate Responsibility for the Crisis and Impose Accountability Measures:** All persons who played an active part in said decision-making process of the switch to Flint River as a drinking water source should be investigated. A strategy for implementation of programs/systems specifically designed for righting the wrongs suffered by the citizens of Flint may include any financial compensation for loss of life, loss of quality of life, education, employment, decreases in property value, increases in insurance rates, etc. Establish support systems for any social, criminal and health issues that need to be addressed, i.e. special education programs, health programs, etc., to accommodate those in need of these services from early childhood throughout adulthood.
- 10) **Equitable Redevelopment Must Include Anti-Displacement Measures:** In the context of redevelopment of Flint in the aftermath of this crisis and as part of the Master Plan as a working document, and with the threat of 80% of homes slated to be demolished on North Side of Flint where the majority of African Americans reside, there must be a re-evaluation and revision of the Master Plan through an inclusive process that prioritizes stability and avoids displacement.
- 11) **Jobs, Contracts, and Other Economic Benefits Must Go to Local Residents:** In Flint, there are multiple business and educational institutions, workers, entrepreneurs, expertise, with resources capable of re-designing and building Flint to become a city of the future. Local Hire and Disadvantage Business Enterprise Ordinances must be established in advance of the coming wave of redevelopment projects and Community Benefits Agreement must be negotiated with all incoming developers.
- 12) **Small Business Owners and Prospective Workers Must Have Access to Capacity Building:** Free skilled trades training should be provided with guaranteed provision of employment opportunities for youth and other interested persons in civil engineering, pipefitting and plumbing for the citizens of Flint. Local contractors must receive support for certifications, equipment/supplies, and back office functions to be competitive.
- 13) **A Multi-Disciplinary Study Must Be Conducted to Assess Impacts and Needs Related to the Crisis:** Concerns have arisen regarding chemicals/substances in addition to the lead, in the water which could have both short-term and long-term harmful health effects on the health and well-being of the citizens of Flint. Impacts must be assessed and remediation needs must be identified.
- 14) **All Academic Reports Arising From the Water Crisis Must Be Available to Flint Residents:** To ensure transparency and accountability and to ensure that residents have full access to information, all academic reports that detail the findings regarding the effects of lead and other chemicals in the water of Flint must be provided to the citizens of Flint
- 15) **A Flint Wide Environmental Assessment Must Occur to Determine and Address Other Risks:** Throughout the City of Flint, there are other environmental issues including the residual contamination from General Motors Operations that are still underground. A thorough assessment and remediation plan are essential.