



Water for All: Human Right to Water Movement in the Great Lakes Region

March 3, 2022

Liz Kirkwood - Executive Director

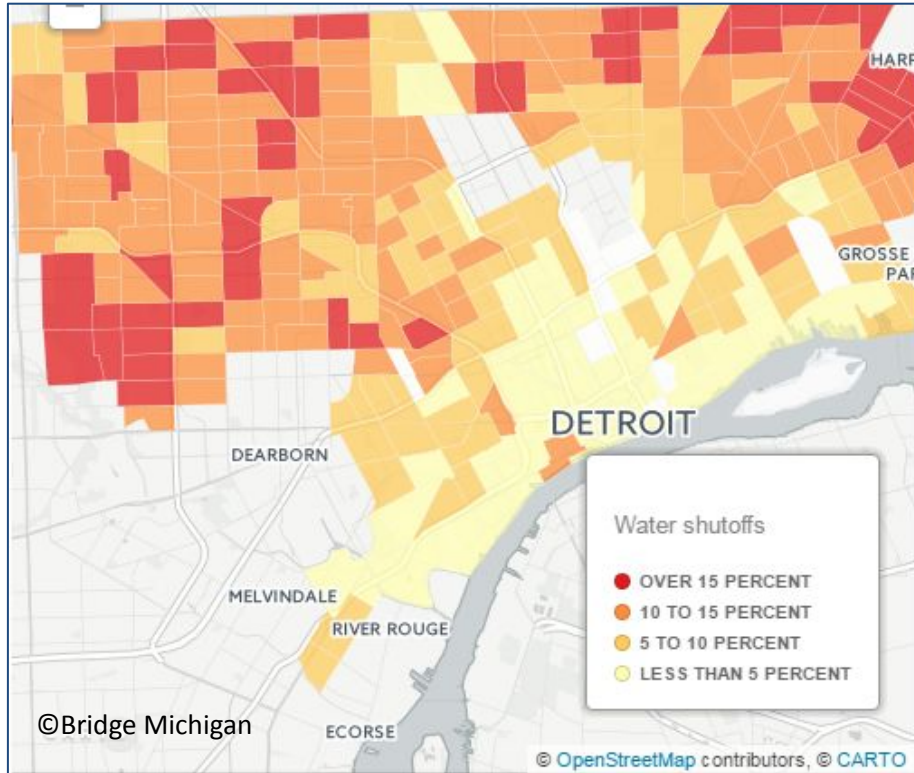
Ensuring the waters of the Great Lakes Basin
are healthy, public and protected for all.





1. Recognizing the public trust that protects the waters and community uses of the Great Lakes.
2. Recognizing water and sanitation as human rights and water as a commons.
3. Banning or phasing out the sale of bottled water in municipal facilities and at municipal events.
4. Promoting publicly financed, owned, and operated safe water and wastewater infrastructure and services.





Privatization:

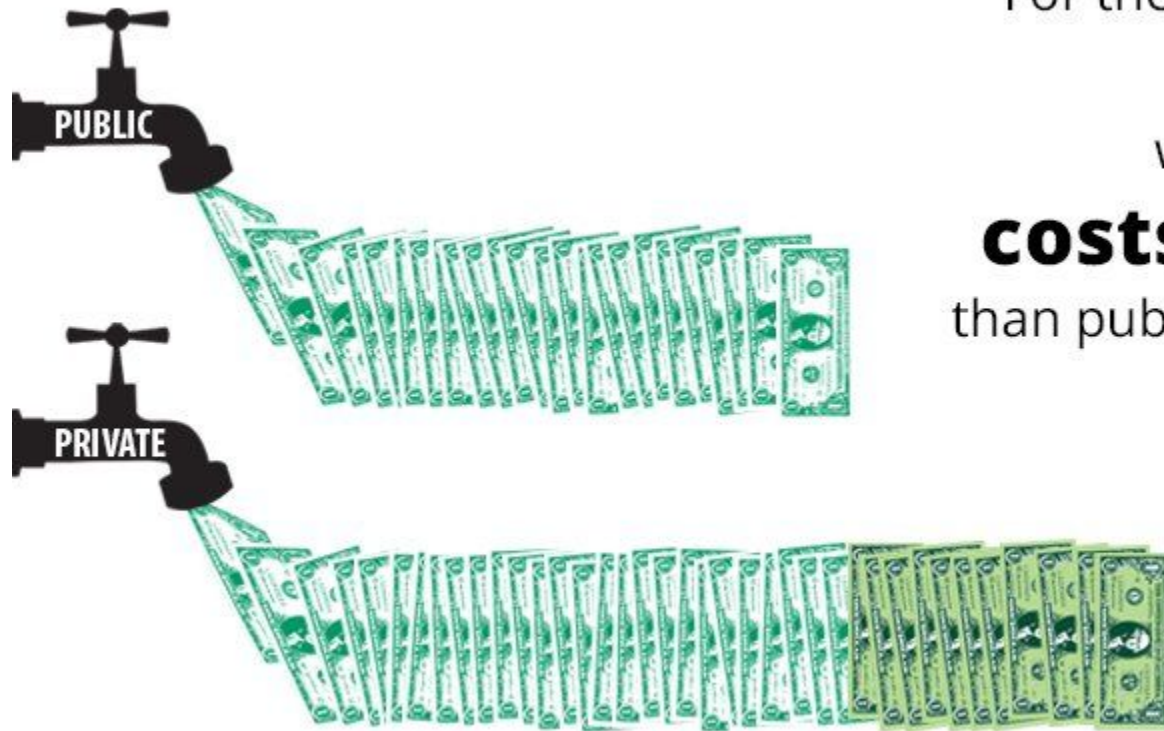
the private ownership of water as a resource or of the infrastructure required to manage water and sanitation services.

Commodification:

Water as a resource that is handled as a commodity under supply and demand dynamics as a way of setting the price of market transactions.

Financialization:

Water management as a financial asset whose value is managed on the financial markets, and in particular on the futures markets.



For the typical household,
privately owned
water utility service
costs 59% more
than public water service —
about \$185
each year.

BOTTLED WATER FACTS

17 
MILLION BARRELS OF OIL
ARE REQUIRED TO MAKE
ENOUGH PLASTIC BOTTLES TO
MEET AMERICA'S BOTTLED
WATER DEMANDS



BOTTLED
WATER IS

3,000%
MORE EXPENSIVE THAN
TAP WATER



60
MILLION
PLASTIC BOTTLES
END UP IN
LANDFILLS AND
INCINERATORS
EVERY DAY

IT
3 TAKES
LITERS
OF WATER
TO CREATE
1 LITER OF
BOTTLED
WATER





BOTTLES TAKE OVER
1,000 YEARS
TO BIODEGRADE

Morgan Stanley

Changing Tides: Investing for Future Water Access

Water inequality is stark: a quarter of the planet lacks access to safe drinking water, nearly half to safe sanitation. Yet demand is set to rise by ~30% by 2050, at a time when climate change and the energy transition will alter patterns of supply and demand in ways that are hard to predict. We explore solutions in markets, regulation and technologies, identifying companies exposed.

cme



Chicago Mercantile Exchange

December 24, 2021

**California Water Index Futures Contracts/Chicago Mercantile Exchange: Food and Water Watch
Petition to the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading
Commission for Suspension**

Nasdaq Veles California Water Index futures

A clear solution to water price risk management.
Now available

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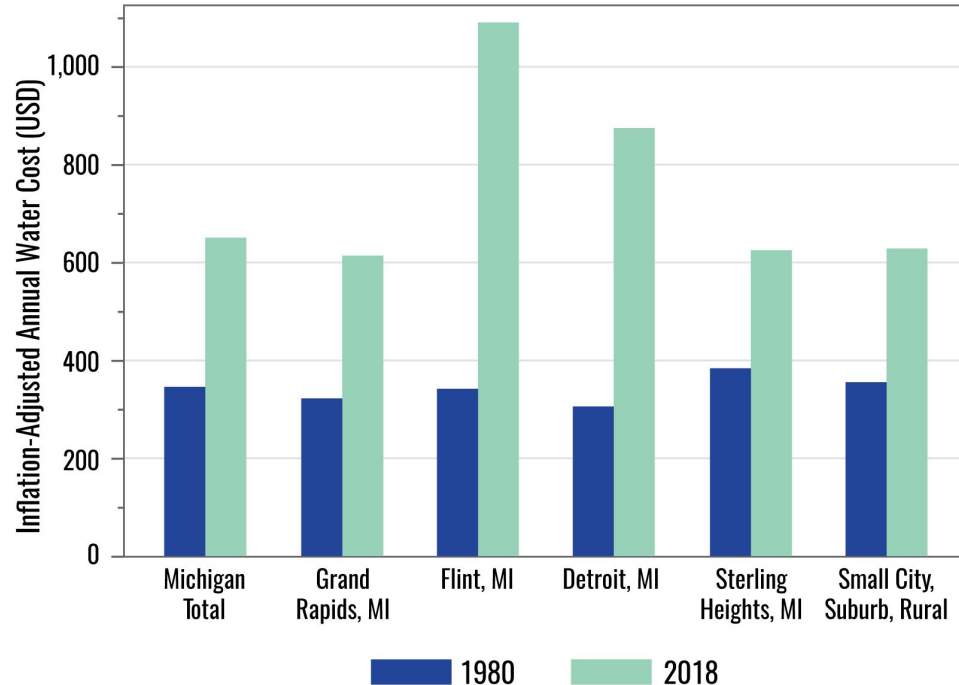




- **2010:** UN General Assembly recognized the human right to water and sanitation in Resolution A/RES/64/292. (122 countries signed on)
- **2012:** California adopted the statutory human right to water
- 10 Countries Recognize Human Right to Water in their Constitutions
- 18 Countries Recognize Human Right to Water in National Legislation
- **2021:** NY adopted the constitutional right to clean water
- **2021:** Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Resolution (MWRD) and Traverse City Resolutions



Fox47 News: Low income households in Michigan are struggling to pay water bills.



VOX: America has a water crisis no one is talking about.

By 2022, 41 million American households may struggle to pay for water



2014 monthly water bill

\$120



6 percent rate increase

\$127



41 percent rate increase

\$169

Source: Elizabeth Mack, Michigan State University
Credit: Sarah Frostenson

What is the Human Right to Water?

Sufficient. A person's daily need is between **50 and 100 litres** of water to ensure that most basic needs are met and few health concerns arise.

Safe. The water required for each personal or domestic use must be free from microorganisms, chemical substances and radiological hazards.

Acceptable. Water should be of an acceptable colour, odour and taste for each personal or domestic use. All water facilities and services must be **culturally** appropriate and sensitive to **gender, lifecycle** and **privacy** requirements.

Accessible and Affordable. According to WHO, the water source has to be within **1,000 metres** of the home and collection time should not exceed **30 minutes**. Water costs should not exceed **3 percent** of household income. (UN Guidelines)

Misconception	Clarification
The right entitles people to free water	Water and sanitation services need to be affordable for all. People are expected to contribute financially or otherwise to the extent that they can do so.
The right allows for unlimited use of water	The right entitles everyone to sufficient water for personal and domestic uses and is to be realised in a sustainable manner for present and future generations.
The right entitles everyone to a household connection	Water and sanitation facilities need to be within, or in the immediate vicinity of the household, and can comprise facilities such as wells and pit latrines.
The right to water entitles people to water resources in other countries.	People cannot claim water from other countries. However, international customary law on transboundary watercourses stipulates that such watercourses should be shared in an equitable and reasonable manner, with priority given to vital human needs.
A country is in violation of the right if not all its people have access to water and sanitation	The right requires that a State take steps to the maximum of available resources to progressively realise the right.

METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT of GREATER CHICAGO

RESOLUTION

SPONSORED by the BOARD of COMMISSIONERS RECOGNIZING

WATER and SANITATION as BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS and that WATER SHALL REMAIN in the PUBLIC TRUST

WHEREAS, water is a necessary component of human life and all known living beings and

WHEREAS, clean drinking water and sanitation is a human right essential for the full enjoyment of life and economic prosperity; and

WHEREAS, approximately 0.5% of the Earth's water is available freshwater, which is often compromised by pollution and excessive withdrawal from lakes, rivers, aquifers, and other water bodies that put those watersheds at risk; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations estimates that by 2025, 1.8 billion people will be living in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity, and two-thirds of the world's population could be living under water-stressed conditions; and

WHEREAS, on December 7, 2020, a water futures market was launched for California water, creating the world's first water futures market that allows traders, banks, hedge funds, and others to bet on future water prices and availability; and

WHEREAS, treating water as another tradable commodity, like gold and oil, benefits some but excludes other segments of society such as disproportionately impacted communities, small-scale farmers, and others without the financial ability to access such markets; and

WHEREAS, water futures markets represent the financialization of life itself and fail to distinguish the value of water beyond finances, such as between usage for non-essential swimming pools and essential sanitation; and

WHEREAS, privately-owned water utilities are not necessarily more cost-effective, nor are they saving residents money compared with publicly-owned utilities, as privately-owned water utility customers pay an average of 59% more for drinking water services and 63% more for sewer services, according to Food & Water Watch; and

WHEREAS, people deserve a voice and the opportunity to determine their water and sewage treatment services; and

WHEREAS, additionally, according to the United Nations, access to a robust and hygienic water supply can save approximately 360,000 infants worldwide from death each year. Currently, it is estimated that one out of every three people, approximately 2.2 billion people, live with contaminated drinking water, often containing feces and other harmful pollutants; and

WHEREAS, equal access to clean water is affected by many factors including climate, financial stability, and proximity to a water source; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Board of Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, do hereby oppose the commodification of water because the value of water is immeasurable, as water shapes every component of our lives. Commodifying water improperly leads to neglect of this valuable resource, which ultimately contributes to the degradation of the environment and is a dominant element in global illness and famine; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we, the Board of Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, do hereby recognize water and sanitation as basic human rights; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we, the Board of Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, do hereby affirm that the water of the Great Lakes, including the source of our drinking water in the Chicago metropolitan area, shall remain in the public trust for the people of the Great Lakes region; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution be spread upon the permanent Record of Proceedings of the Board of Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.



DATED THIS 3rd DAY of JUNE, 2021.

BOARD of COMMISSIONERS

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City of Traverse City

Office of the City Clerk

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Traverse City, MI 49684
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Resolution Proclaiming Water and Sanitation as Basic Human Rights, and that Water Shall Remain in the Public Trust

BECAUSE, water is a necessary component of human life and all known living beings; and

BECAUSE, clean drinking water and sanitation is a human right essential for the full enjoyment of life and economic prosperity; and

BECAUSE, only a small percentage of the Earth's water is available freshwater, which is often compromised by pollution, and excessive withdrawal from lakes, rivers, aquifers, and other water bodies that put those watersheds at risk; and

BECAUSE, the United Nations estimates that by 2025, 1.8 billion people will be living in regions impacted by water scarcity, and two-thirds of the world's population could be living in water-stressed areas due to over-use of water, climate change, and population growth; and

BECAUSE, on December 7, 2020, a water futures market was launched for California water, creating the world's first water futures market that allows traders, banks, hedge funds, and others to bet on future water prices and availability; and

BECAUSE, treating water as another tradable commodity, like gold and oil, benefits some but disproportionately excludes other segments of society, such as low-income communities, small-scale farmers, and others without the financial ability to access such markets; and

BECAUSE, water futures markets represent the financialization of life itself, and fail to distinguish the value of water beyond finances, such as between usage for non-essential swimming pools and essential sanitation; and

BECAUSE, privately-owned water utilities are not necessarily more cost-effective, nor are they saving residents money compared with publicly-owned utilities, as privately-owned water utility customers pay an average of 59% more for drinking water services and 63% more for sewer services, according to Food & Water Watch; and

BECAUSE, additionally, according to the United Nations, access to a robust and hygienic water supply can save approximately 360,000 infants worldwide from death each year. Currently, it is estimated that one out of every three people, approximately 2.2 billion people, live with contaminated drinking water, often containing feces and other harmful pollutants; and

BECAUSE, equal access to clean water is affected by many factors including climate, financial stability, and proximity to a water source; and

By protecting
water as a
human right,
this resolution:

promotes human dignity and guides strong public policy to secure safe affordable water for all.

offers clear guidelines to tackle immediate + long-term infrastructure investments.

counters water trends of commodification, privatization, and financialization.

informs and empowers important community-wide priorities

restores the social contract between residents and local governments.

What is your community's responsibility?

No legally binding obligation imposed

Community commitment to prioritize a water equity agenda supported by strong public policies and management that

- Secure water access for all
- Design rate structures that assure water affordability
- Provide long-term stable federal, state, provincial funding



FLOW

FOR LOVE OF WATER

“Thousands have lived
without love, not one
without water.”

-W. H. Auden

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flowforwater.org

