



## **Flint Water Crisis--- NAACP 20-Point Community Priorities Plan**

### **COMMUNITY CONTEXT**

Community meetings, 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, the implementation of which set off the string of decisions 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 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**

### **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- 1) Emergency Financial Manager Law Must Be Repealed:** Dissolve any and all oversight appointments which negate the authority of the elected mayor of the City of Flint, the Honorable Dr.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. Support the efforts of the Mayor as she moves forward in overseeing the business of the city.
- 2) Risk Advisories and Mitigation Instructions Must Be Factual, Timely and Consistently Delivered to All Residents:** Ongoing, credible communication on most current fact-based information must be provided routinely and proactively by relevant authorities.
- 3) Information Sharing and Service Delivery Must Be Accessible to All:** Methods of delivering information and services must be linguistically and culturally appropriate for various populations, including racial and ethnic minority groups, people with disabilities, undocumented persons, formerly incarcerated persons, persons with low literacy, non-English speakers, etc.

- 4) Water Distribution by the National Guard Must Be Replaced by Local Youth Labor:** Supervised youth must be given this opportunity to receive no less than minimum wages rate \$8.50 per hour for delivering water to homes during daylight hours as well as collecting and recycling the extensive water bottle waste that will result.
- 5) 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 locally owned grocers/farmers markets.
- 6) Fairness/Justice Must Be Examined in Rate Hikes and Continued Billing for Poisonous Water:** Provide immediate relief for Flint residents by lowering and/or providing water credits to a more reasonable level for residents 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 where over 40% of the households are below the poverty line.
- 7) 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 for repair or replacement of pipes, plumbing, appliances, and water tanks damage due to corrosion.
- 8) All Flint Residents Must Be Provided Federally 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. refrigerators with ice makers, washing machines, etc., which may have been damaged as a result of the water crisis.
- 9) The City of Flint Must Have a New, State of the Art, Water Distribution System:** Build a state-of-the-art infrastructure water distribution system, including damaged pipes from the city street/curbs leading into the homes of the citizens of the City of Flint, schools and small, privately owned businesses.
- 10) 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.
- 11) Responsibility for the Crisis Must Be Investigated and Accountability Measures Must Be Imposed:** All persons who played an active part in 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 financial compensation for loss of life, loss of quality of life, education, employment, decreases in property value, increases in insurance rates, etc.
- 12) Multi-Disciplinary Studies 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 well-being of the citizens of Flint. Impacts must be assessed and remediation needs must be identified.
- 13) All Academic Reports Arising From the Water Crisis Must Be Available to Flint Residents:** To ensure transparency and accountability, as well as ensuring 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
- 14) A Dedicated Fund for Support Systems Must Be Established to Address Impacts of Lead and Other Toxic Exposure:** Through this dedicated fund, support systems must be established to address social, criminal and health issues arising from the water crisis, i.e. early childhood education programs, special education programs, counseling/mental health programs, medical care, community based, rehabilitation focused policing programs, etc., to accommodate those in need of these services from early childhood throughout adulthood.

- 15) 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. Community Benefits Agreements must be negotiated with all developers.
- 16) 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 rebuilding Flint to become a city of the future. Local hire and Disadvantage Business Enterprise (DBE) provisions/ordinances must be established in advance of the coming wave of redevelopment projects.
- 17) Small Business Owners and Prospective Workers Must Have Access to Capacity Building:** Free skilled trades training should be provided for the citizens of Flint, with guaranteed provision of employment opportunities for youth and other interested persons in civil engineering, pipefitting and plumbing. Local contractors must receive support for certifications, equipment/supplies, and back office functions needed to be competitive.
- 18) 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 prior industrial operations that are still underground. A thorough assessment and implementation of a remediation plan are essential.
- 19) The Environmental Justice Plan for the State of Michigan, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Environmental Quality, as established by Executive Order 2011-1, Must Be Instituted:** The plan includes measures to identify, address and prevent discriminatory public health or environmental effects of state laws, regulations, policies and activities on Michigan residents, while balancing productive economic growth with the high quality of life that is important to all people. In implementing the plan, there must be cooperation, across various federal and state agencies and programs, to address environmental justice concerns and ensure meaningful engagement of residents.
- 20) An Independent Community Oversight Board Must Be Established:** To ensure community driven review of processes and decision making, trusted community members must examine research findings and proposed plans, and evaluate outcomes of programming and policies, as well as act as stewards of accountability to the contents of this plan and beyond.