



## GENESEE COUNTY DRAIN COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**What:** Response to Bill Johnson and DWSD's position on KWA

**When:** March 21, 2013

**Additional Info:** Jeff Wright, Genesee County Drain Commissioner, today condemns an opinion by the DWSD and facts released from a Tucker, Young, Jackson, and Tull (TYJT) report regarding the Karegnondi Water Authority (KWA), and the City of Flint's inclusion in such authority.

The items released from the report by TYJT are founded on inaccurate information, biased assumptions, and corrupt data. The opinions are dangerous in their conclusions, potentially leading to Flint residents paying unimaginably higher water bills, just when our community can least afford ANY increase.

The released information grossly overestimates the cost of the KWA, double counting several key costs in engineering, construction, administration, and legal fees. The most egregious error is in engineering costs, where it is absurdly claimed that the cost will be a staggering \$32 million more than what the actual estimates state. In totality, the report is incorrect to the tune of \$85 million, well outside the margin of error, leading to no other conclusion than pure bias. The DWSD and Tucker Young opinion goes against two nationally reputable firms, and 3 local engineering companies. Tucker Young's opinion is in direct contradiction to all of these independent firms.

In addition, the press release by Bill Johnson is even inconsistent with the Tucker Young report that it purports as fact. The press release states the difference between the KWA estimate and Tucker Young is over \$101 million, when the difference between the reports is actually \$85 million. This proves that the entities behind the media blitz are either so incompetent they cannot read their own report, or their disregard for anything resembling a fact is so high that they will say anything to derail the KWA project to benefit their own interests.

"It is sad that we are currently seeing politics as usual when it comes to bias within Detroit, and now this has been extended to Tucker Young" said Jeff Wright. "This firm has too many connections to the folks within the DWSD to be taken credibly, especially when you look at all of the inaccuracies it contains. Tucker Young and the Detroit politicians have one goal in mind, continuing the revolving door of money

out of the pockets of Flint residents, and into the hands of Detroit interests to subsidize their own mismanagement” said Wright.

The report also completely ignores the fact that if Flint continues contractually with Detroit, it will be forced to absorb costs in maintaining the current 50 year old pipeline that is used to transport drinking water, and eventually pay an exorbitant portion of building a new pipeline built by Detroit, for their own interests. It is also well known that Tucker Young is in line to contract with Detroit on this new pipeline. Tucker Young erroneously believes that they can stop the entire KWA project if they stop Flint from joining, which they believe will benefit their bottom line. To do this they are using Flint as pawns in their effort. Ironically the KWA pipeline will go forward regardless of Flint’s involvement. The only ones who will be hurt if Tucker Young’s goal of misleading Flint is achieved are Flint’s residents.

“The report is based in fantasy, numbers Detroit has pulled from the sky” said Wright. “Here in Flint, we don’t have that luxury. We have to go by actual data, because we are accountable to the people who elected us. The most damning proof against this report is the actual bids given by private companies competing to build the first portion of the project. The TYJT report put that cost at nearly \$30 million. The low bid was for \$26.7 million. That is a mistake of more than \$3 million, and this is just the first portion of the project. This proves the erroneous nature of the report, and the fact that this is simply a last ditch effort by Detroit to keep their funding stream going” said Wright.

The timing of the media blitz from Detroit is also questionable, considering this report was commissioned months ago, and they choose to wait until Flint is on the precipice of making a decision on their future to go public.

“We are at a point where a decision must be made, and cannot take the strain of further delays” said Wright. “This is Flint’s decision, and Flint’s decision alone to make.”

Under the old Emergency Manager law the Flint City Council has until March 27<sup>th</sup> to vote on how they would like to proceed. “Not acting before then will be tantamount to another 30 year contract with Detroit,” said Wright. “If Lansing gets to decide, that is what they will force upon Flint residents.”