



Rochester Hills

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Master

File Number: 2024-0134

File ID: 2024-0134

Type: Administration

Status: To Council

Version: 1

Reference: 2024-0134

Controlling Body: City Council
Regular Meeting

File Created Date : 02/23/2024

File Name: Resolution Opposing the Water Affordability Act

Final Action:

Title label: Resolution Opposing the Water Affordability Act

Notes:

Sponsors:

Enactment Date:

Attachments: 030424 Agenda Summary.pdf

Enactment Number:

Contact:

Hearing Date:

Drafter:

Effective Date:

History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
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Text of Legislative File 2024-0134

Title

Resolution Opposing the Water Affordability Act

Body

Whereas, House Bills 5088 through 5093 have been introduced in the State of Michigan House of Representatives and Senate Bills 549 through 554 have been introduced in the State of Michigan Senate (hereinafter "bills"); and

Whereas, the above referenced bills have been referred to State House of Representatives and State Senate committees for consideration; and

Whereas, these introduced bills would, if enacted into law, impose new fees on Michigan residents who receive water from municipal water providers; and

Whereas, the fees in the proposed legislation would add between \$24 and \$36 to the annual water bills of City of Rochester Hills residents; and

Whereas, the fee proposed will have a disproportionate negative impact on low-income residents and seniors because it is a fixed fee without consideration of water usage; and

Whereas, the intent of the introduced bills is to assist lower income residents throughout Michigan by paying their water bills; and

Whereas, City of Rochester Hills is responsible for the distribution of water to approximately 30,000 residential households and commercial customers received from the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA); and

Whereas, GLWA currently provides a Water Residential Assistance Program (WRAP) that offers low-income customers an income-based assistance plan with up to \$100 a month in bill credits, \$2,400 in bill arrearage assistance, and \$2,000 in plumbing repairs; and

Whereas, City of Rochester Hills funds the WRAP within the current charges it receives from GLWA and must pass along those charges to the residential and commercial customers through the current water rates which are calculated each year and approved by the City Council; and

Whereas, the City of Rochester Hills has established a Water System Advisory Council to review water and sewer rates on an annual basis and provide a recommendation to City Council, and the Water System Advisory Council in recent years has recommended a smoothing option, which raises water rates at a uniformly year over year to allow predictability in water rates for residents and reduce the need for significant rate increases; and

Whereas, House Bills 5088-5093/Senate Bills 549-554 adds an additional burden on residential and commercial customers that frustrates the City's ability to smooth water rate increases; and

Whereas, money obtained from Oakland County GLWA ratepayers to support the WRAP program is allocated to support low-income residents in need of assistance in Oakland County; and

Whereas, House Bills 5088-5093/Senate Bills 549-554 duplicate a service already provided by the existing WRAP program; and

Whereas, passage of House Bills 5088-5093 and Senate Bills 549-554 would create another state entity to perform the same function as the WRAP program with no requirement that the funds generated from the new fees be committed to the locality and provides no local control. GLWA has representation on its board from Oakland County and the WRAP program is administered locally by a local community action agency enabling local control and attentiveness to local needs.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the City Council of the City of Rochester Hills opposes passage of House Bills 5088-5093 and Senate Bills 549-554 on the basis that they raise water costs to City of Rochester Hills residents and businesses, and duplicate an existing service to low-income individuals; and

Be It Further Resolved, that a copy of this resolution be distributed to all state legislators representing residents of City of Rochester Hills and urge our state-elected representatives and the representatives from Oakland County to oppose this legislation.