

Trenton Water Works
Office of Communications and Public Outreach
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For Immediate Release

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Joint Statement from Mayors W. Reed Gusciora, Jeff Martin of Hamilton Township, Bert Steinmann of Ewing Township, Patricia Hendricks Farmer of Lawrence Township, and Courtney Peters-Manning of Hopewell Township Concerning Trenton Water Works

MERCER COUNTY, N.J. — Today, Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) released a report—a technical, managerial, and financial assessment of Trenton Water Works (TWW)—that highlights specific deficiencies at TWW and recommending the creation of a new public utility entity to operate the water system. This entity must be separate and independent from Trenton municipal government; hence, able to access special financing, advance capital work, be operationally efficient, attract additional talent, and remain free from political interference. **We, the Mayors of TWW-serviced towns, agree that the status quo is not sustainable, and we believe that creating a new public utility, with governance that allows for greater operational independence and collaboration across municipalities, is a necessary step forward**

As one of the oldest publicly owned water systems in the United States, TWW was once highly respected in the water industry. It has grown significantly through the years to serve five municipalities: Trenton, parts of Hamilton Township, Ewing Township, Lawrence Township, and Hopewell Township. The system also regularly supplies water to the Aqua New Jersey water utility through an interconnection. While the water filtration plant is more than 50 years old, it can produce up to 60 million gallons of drinking water daily, far exceeding the current demand of 33 million gallons.

It is important to note that the majority of TWW’s customers—55%—reside outside of Trenton, yet the other four municipalities have no formal role in TWW’s governance or authority over its operations. This disconnect between the service area’s needs and TWW management underscores the necessity of a new governance model.

To further guide improvements, DEP procured independent third-party assessments to objectively appraise the status of TWW and explore options for restructuring. These assessments confirmed that the status quo is not an effective solution and a new utility entity could be successful if independent of Trenton’s municipal government. They also emphasize that this new entity can meet and maintain compliance with safe drinking water standards and ensure the long-term sustainability of system assets if its governance, management, and operations are fully modernized and professionalized.

The strain on TWW’s outdated infrastructure has resulted in the need for many costly upgrades. It is important to note that New Jersey’s water systems with large multi-municipality service areas like TWW have capital projects costing millions of dollars. TWW is no exception, as highlighted by its proposed \$600 million capital improvement program from the early 2000’s.

The mayors representing TWW’s service area—including Jeff Martin of Hamilton Township, Bert Steinmann of Ewing Township, Patricia Hendricks Farmer of Lawrence Township, Courtney Peters-Manning of Hopewell Township, and W. Reed Gusciora of the City of Trenton—have agreed to work

together to fundamentally improve and make needed investments as part of this transformation to a new public utility entity. Our residents deserve nothing less.

Our key priorities for establishing a dedicated public utility entity to achieve our goal include:

- A complete and transparent appraisal of the new public entity-creation process.
- An accounting of the costs that will be needed to fairly compensate the City of Trenton for its asset.
- An assessment of the project's impact on rates and fees.
- A public campaign to announce how the new structure will impact ratepayers such as the necessary capital work, including upgrades to the water filtration plant, improvements to the distribution system, and the creation of new positions with competitive salaries to attract and retain skilled professionals.

The collaboration between mayors is already underway and will continue to accelerate over the next six months. Together, we aim to restore the public's faith and confidence in this this new entity.

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