

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Green Party Calls for transparency and debate on Water Rate Increase
and Resignation of the Director of Public Utilities**

Cleveland, Ohio - February 28, 2011 - Members of the Green Party of Cuyahoga County will gather on the steps of Cleveland City Hall Monday evening at 5:30 pm. They will be calling for transparency and open debate on the subject of the proposed rate increase for water service that was included in Mayor Jackson's estimated budget and revealed on Friday.

The proposed rate increase is intended to close a \$20 million dollar gap in the Division of Water's budget, but it requires legislative approval by Cleveland City Council.

Greens call for transparency and an explanation of the issues that have led to this crisis, to include:

1. Immediate release of the water rate study, conducted in 2010.
2. A draft 2011 budget for the Division of Water without the rate increase.
3. Hearings on a water rate increase proposal as well as the other management and financial challenges facing the Division of Water.
 - a. ask for a detailed description of the scope for the consultancy approved last month

Brian Cummins (G), Cleveland City Council member and a member of Council's Utility Committee stated, "It's disappointing that it has come to this. The Division of Water has seen some excellent improvements in its operations in the last five years. The quality of the water is great but all of the good is outweighed by the poor customer service, billing errors and executive mismanagement."

Renaldo Gates, Cleveland native and Green Party member said "Billing, metering and customer service problems have plagued the Division of Water for over two years. These problems, coupled with the latest budget emergency have caused us to demand the resignation of Barry Withers, Director of Public Utilities."

David Ellison, former Green Party candidate for Cuyahoga County Executive added, "This is similar to the problems we've seen at the county where people who are not qualified to be in leadership positions have prevented efficient, trustworthy and reliable government services from being provided. For the sake of Cleveland's and the region's future, we need qualified public servants and a culture of public service committed to our success – not just their own.

The Green Party is qualified and recognized as a minor political party by the state of Ohio
2002 W. 41st St.
Cleveland, OH 44113

David Ellison, contact: (216)-631-0557

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