

**U.S. Bankruptcy Court, *In re: City of Detroit, Debtor***  
**Objection to “Plan of Adjustment”**  
**Testimony by Kristen A. Hamel, Detroit resident and homeowner**  
**July 15, 2014**

In recent weeks, Detroiters have been experiencing the inhuman austerity agenda of Gov. Rick Snyder and Emergency Dictator Kevyn Orr. Thousands of families have had their water cut off, and tens of thousands more face imminent shutoffs if a mere \$150 is owed.

The situation is so outrageous that a United Nations commission has condemned Detroit’s water shutoffs as a violation of international human rights. Freedom Friday marches starting at the water department building have been going on for weeks because no one should have to face forced deprivation of water, the most basic necessity of life and health.

The Detroit Free Press reported Orr’s office calling the water shutoffs “a necessary part of Detroit’s restructuring.” The real agenda is to make the water department more attractive for privatization to union busters like Veolia Corp., known worldwide for its crimes against humanity, especially against the Palestinian people.

While the poorest Detroiters have their water cut off for owing \$150, JPMorgan Chase, UBS, Loop Financial and Morgan Stanley were paid \$537 million in termination fees on interest rate swaps out of \$1 billion in bonds issued from 2010 to 2013, bonds that were earmarked to fund repairs of the water infrastructure system, not line the pockets of these four banks.

Orr, while cutting off water to the poor and raising water rates, has not taken one step to recover this \$537 million giveaway to the banks. Orr and Buckfire were also ready to hand over hundreds of millions to Bank of America and UBS on the interest rate swaps associated with the pension obligation certificates. Because of community outcry against these swindles, they were forced by this court on two occasions to go back to the negotiating table.

As you have stated on prior occasions, Judge Rhodes, the buck stops with you in these bankruptcy proceedings.

It is up to you to stop the national and international disgrace and humanitarian disaster of mass water shutoffs in the city of Detroit. You must immediately enjoin these shutoffs by placing a moratorium on them TODAY and ordering Orr to implement a real water affordability plan for the poorest Detroiters.

And it is up to you to order Orr and his cronies to stop shilling for the banks that Jones Day lists as its clients, and to recoup and recover the \$537 million paid to the banks out of water bonds meant for the people. Chase and UBS have a record of criminal fraud regarding swaps like these all across the U.S. Go after the banks, not the poor, because in Detroit, the city most devastated by years of bank fraud and racist predatory lending, the people are paying the banks rather than the other way around. This is not equitable.

The cause of justice demands the funds stolen by the banks from the people of Detroit be recouped and returned to our city. Justice demands the plan of austerity against the workers, residents and especially the retirees be denied.

This entire bankruptcy has also been a looting frenzy by Jones Day, Conway McKenzie, Buckfire and Associates, and even Dentons, the so-called retiree committee lawyers. These attorneys and consultants took \$130 million from Detroiters, while services deteriorate for those of us who actually live in the city.

The people of Detroit have a long and proud history of struggle for social and economic justice. And that struggle will revive no matter the outcome of this sham bankruptcy. We will fight for our rights to water, health care, education, housing, jobs, living wages, a decent retirement and to reclaim our city for the people. That is the tradition of Detroit. And it will rise up again, because without justice there can be no peace.