

Central Iowa Regional Drinking Water Commission
HF 316 Talking Points

- Delivering safe drinking water, a public health and safety necessity, should not be a partisan issue. HF 316 is a House agriculture committee bill dictating water supply policy to the Des Moines area. Why would this legislation be introduced by a Representative from a small eastern Iowa community who has no interest in the Metro water supply?
- This legislation is cloaked as a regionalization bill. In actuality, this bill takes assets from local water utilities to the financial benefit of city governments, particularly Des Moines. This is inequitable to those who paid for the assets.
- This legislation dismantles an existing, highly effective, collection of separate, locally-controlled, water systems that are currently working together to provide safe, abundant and affordable water by mutual agreement. The participants are working to improve their collaboration, but the current system is highly functional to meet existing and anticipated water supply needs of the Des Moines area.
- This legislation dismantles existing governance structures and replaces them, without local input, with a vaguely defined state-mandated structure which will be required by law to be controlled by the City of Des Moines. The existing system does not need to be destroyed to be improved.
- This legislation eliminates the rights of the citizens of Urbandale, West Des Moines and Des Moines to change the structure of THEIR utilities by a vote of the people.
- Regionalization, in and of itself, could be positive for water systems in the DM region, but it must be driven by local needs and decisions. This is why a coalition of water utilities, Central Iowa Drinking Water Commission (CIRDWC) commissioned a study in 2014, and have been discussing regionalization since the completion of the study in 2015. CIRDWC has formed a Technical Advisory Committee, involving DMWW and their wholesale customers, to conduct long-range planning for the DM metro area's water needs through 2040. A final long range plan is expected Q2 2017.
- Regionalization is currently being studied and should be pursued by those who will be impacted by any changes. Legislating local policy at the state level is not appropriate.
- HF 316 puts a freeze on capital investment, threatening safe drinking water compliance and economic growth in the DM metro area.
- The water utilities in the metro area deliver safe and affordable drinking water, and have long histories of financial diligence that have resulted in healthy water systems at relatively affordable rates. Taking assets at the risk of public health is reflective of the government action

that created the public health water crisis in Flint, Michigan. Unlike in Michigan, however, there is no initial “crisis” to be addressed by this legislation.

- This bill gives ultimate regional control to the City of Des Moines and does not give equal representation to wholesale customers. While there has been interest by wholesale customers in more customer representation on DMWW’s board, especially in relation to rates, the existing DMWW Board of Trustees has demonstrated a history of independence and facilitation of joint regional solutions that are not DM centric. This would likely end under a City of Des Moines controlled regional water system.
- To signal an openness for greater representation under the current system until a regional solution is developed, DMWW has presented an invitation to wholesale customers for representation on DMWW’s Finance & Audit Committee.
- Des Moines water utilities and city leaders of DMWW wholesale customers should work together to oppose this legislation and defeat passage of the bill. Ask your Legislators to look out for your best interests and allow CIRDWC to continue working on a regional structure that is favored by the stakeholders--DM metro area participants.