

Michigan wrote the nation's toughest lead rule. Your capital plan has to deliver on it.

A full lead-service-line replacement mandate, a Flint legacy that still sets the political temperature, enforceable PFAS limits on seven compounds, and aging combined sewers that flooded thousands of basements in 2021 — every one of those forces reshuffles the projects on a Michigan utility's list. Invizion helps Michigan water utilities re-sequence a capital portfolio in a click, and defend every decision.

\$31.4B¹ Michigan's 20-year water infrastructure need — about \$16.3B for drinking water and \$15.1B for wastewater.	3.9M² People served by the Great Lakes Water Authority — roughly 40% of all water customers in Michigan.	12 ppb³ Michigan's lead action level as of Jan. 1, 2025 — tighter than the federal 15 ppb, part of the strictest Lead & Copper Rule in the nation.	\$1.28B¹ Federal State Revolving Fund water dollars to Michigan since 2022 — about \$354M dedicated to lead line replacement.
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THE MICHIGAN LANDSCAPE

Four forces are moving your project list at once

None of these is theoretical in Michigan, and none of them waits for your next budget cycle. Together they mean the capital plan you approved last year may already be the wrong plan.

COMPLIANCE — LEAD

A full lead-line mandate, on a fixed clock

After Flint — where the crisis began in 2014, exposed roughly 100,000 residents, and ended in a settlement of about \$641 million with the last lead pipe pulled in July 2025⁴ — Michigan rebuilt its Lead & Copper Rule into the strictest in the country. It requires water systems to replace *every* lead service line, bans partial replacements, and lowered the lead action level to 12 ppb effective January 1, 2025.³

Michigan carries one of the largest lead-service-line inventories in the nation, with hundreds of thousands of lines still confirmed or unverified as lead.⁵ The state calls its rule the strongest in the country⁶ — and roughly \$354M of federal SRF money is already earmarked for the work.¹ The mandate is funded, dated, and unforgiving of a slipping schedule.

AFFORDABILITY — GLWA & DETROIT

The affordability question never leaves the room

The Great Lakes Water Authority is the backbone of Southeast Michigan: about 3.9 million people across eight counties and 127 member communities, roughly 40% of the state's water customers, with a \$50-million-a-year capital allocation flowing to Detroit under its regional lease²

Detroit's history of mass water shutoffs made affordability a permanent part of the capital conversation. The city's Lifeline Plan now caps low-income households' bills, funded in part through GLWA's Water Residential Assistance Program⁷ Every rate increase to fund renewal has to clear that affordability bar — which makes *sequencing*, not just spending, the real decision.

QUALITY — PFAS

Enforceable PFAS limits on seven compounds

In August 2020 Michigan set enforceable drinking-water limits for seven PFAS compounds — including PFOA at 8 ppt and PFOS at 16 ppt — and monitors roughly 2,700 public water supplies against them.⁸

The state also carries costly legacy contamination: Wolverine World Wide agreed in February 2020 to a \$69.5-million settlement over PFAS dumpsites that tainted drinking water in the Belmont and Rockford area north of Grand Rapids.⁹ For affected systems, treatment and new supply are capital line items, not hypotheticals.

RENEWAL — AGING SEWERS

Old combined sewers, and rain that doesn't fit them

Michigan's wastewater and stormwater systems need more than \$18 billion over the next 20 years, much of it pipe and treatment that is already over 50 years old — some approaching a century of service. The state's drinking-water systems face an annual funding gap of \$860 million to \$1.1 billion on top of that.¹⁰

The risk is not abstract: in June 2021, intense storms overwhelmed GLWA pump stations and flooded thousands of metro-Detroit basements with stormwater and sewage.¹¹ Combined-sewer and resiliency capital now competes head-to-head with lead and PFAS work for the same dollars.

WHO RUNS MICHIGAN'S WATER

A public, regional system — GLWA at the center, hundreds of municipals around it

Michigan water is overwhelmingly publicly owned. A single regional authority anchors the southeast, large cities run their own systems outstate, and hundreds of smaller community systems fill the map. Investor-owned water is a minor share of the state.

Municipal & regional systems

Rates set locally by councils, commissions & authority boards

Great Lakes Water Authority ~3.9M served · 127 communities · 5 water plants²

Detroit Water & Sewerage (DWSD) GLWA's largest retail member · Lifeline Plan

Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor, Lansing Large outstate municipal systems

Flint Completed full lead-line replacement, 2025⁴

Hundreds of community systems Small & rural systems statewide

GLWA's Water Resource Recovery Facility is the second-largest single-site wastewater plant in North America.¹¹

Authorities, districts & small systems

Regional wholesalers and the systems where funding gaps hit hardest

Regional water authorities Wholesale supply beyond the GLWA footprint

County drain & sewer districts Own much of the combined-sewer network

Small & rural community systems Least able to absorb lead & PFAS costs

Limited investor-owned presence Michigan water is predominantly public

Every capital dollar has to be defensible

Michigan has no statewide rate regulator for most water utilities — which puts the burden of justification squarely on local boards and on EGLE's compliance mandates. The question is the same everywhere: why this project, why now, why at this cost?

EGLE (Dept. of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy) holds Safe Drinking Water Act primacy and enforces the Lead & Copper Rule — the 12 ppb action level and full lead-service-line replacements³

Full lead-line replacement is the defining capital driver: every lead service line must be replaced, partial replacements are barred, and progress is reported to the state⁵

PFAS MCLs for seven compounds are monitored across roughly 2,700 public supplies.⁸

City councils, commissions & authority boards set water and sewer rates in public; there is no statewide PUC rate case for most Michigan systems, so the record you bring to the board is the review.

The money is moving — can your plan absorb it?

Michigan utilities have more capital funding available than they've had in a generation. The constraint is no longer only dollars — it's readiness: which projects are shovel-ready, which qualify, and how the timing lines up with everything else on the list.

Drinking Water SRF — ~\$690M since 2022 administered by EGLE, including roughly \$354M dedicated to lead service line replacement.¹

Clean Water SRF — ~\$591M since 2022 for wastewater, stormwater and combined-sewer projects, with principal forgiveness for disadvantaged communities.¹

WIFIA low-interest federal loans are in play in Michigan — e.g. a \$56M WIFIA loan closed in 2023 for a Michigan water and wastewater treatment build.¹²

The scale of the need dwarfs the funding \$31.4B over 20 years in Michigan against a national \$625B drinking-water gap — which is exactly why sequencing every available dollar matters.¹³

MICHIGAN WATER, IN BRIEF

Questions Michigan utility leaders are asking

Short, sourced answers — the same facts we'll dig into on a call, in the context of your system.

Why is Michigan's Lead and Copper Rule called the strictest in the nation?

Michigan requires water systems to replace every lead service line, bans partial replacements, and — as of January 1, 2025 — lowered the lead action level to 12 ppb, below the federal 15 ppb. The state describes it as the strongest Lead & Copper Rule in the country, and roughly \$354M in federal SRF money is earmarked to help utilities do the work.³¹

How big is Michigan's water infrastructure need?

Michigan faces about \$31.4 billion in water infrastructure needs over the next 20 years — roughly \$16.3 billion for drinking water and \$15.1 billion for wastewater — and separately an annual drinking-water funding gap estimated at \$860 million to \$1.1 billion. Much of the pipe and treatment in service is over 50 years old.¹¹⁰

What are Michigan's PFAS rules?

In August 2020 Michigan set enforceable drinking-water MCLs for seven PFAS compounds, including PFOA at 8 ppt and PFOS at 16 ppt, and monitors about 2,700 public water supplies. The state also has costly legacy sites — Wolverine World Wide settled for \$69.5 million in 2020 over PFAS contamination near Grand Rapids.⁸⁹

Who sets my utility's water rates in Michigan?

For the vast majority of Michigan systems, rates are set locally — by city councils, commissions, or a regional authority board like GLWA's — not by a statewide public utilities commission. EGLE regulates water quality and compliance, but the rate and capital decision is made in front of your own governing body and ratepayers.²

What funding is available to Michigan water utilities?

Since 2022 Michigan has received roughly \$690 million through its Drinking Water SRF and \$591 million through its Clean Water SRF — about \$1.28 billion combined, with \$354 million dedicated to lead line replacement. WIFIA loans and USDA Rural Development financing are also in play. The constraint is increasingly readiness and sequencing, not the size of the pool.¹¹²

How does Invizion help Michigan water utilities plan capital?

Invizion is scenario-based capital portfolio optimization for water utilities. It lets you model how a lead-line deadline, a PFAS treatment obligation, a flooding-driven sewer project, or a new SRF award reshuffles your whole project list, re-sequence the portfolio automatically against your constraints, and keep a defensible record of every trade-off for your board and ratepayers. The best next step is a short first meeting to look at it against your own program.

REFERENCES

Sources

Every figure in this briefing is tied to a primary or authoritative source.

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13. U.S. EPA, 7th Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment — national 20-year drinking-water need of \$625 billion, 2023. epa.gov/dwsrf

ABOUT INVIZION

Capital program optimization for utilities

Invizion is a purpose-built capital lifecycle management platform for water and wastewater utilities. It integrates budgeting, CIP, scenario analysis, and funding-source tracking in one system — so utilities can re-sequence a capital portfolio in a click and demonstrate audit-ready, defensible decisions to regulators, boards, and rating agencies.

See what a defensible Michigan capital plan looks like — book a 20-minute first meeting.

Book your first meeting →