

WATER@MICHIGAN 2017

Presentation Summary

Sarah Mills

Postdoctoral Fellow & Michigan Public Policy Survey Project Manager, Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan

sbmills@umich.edu | (734) 615-5315

Local government views on drinking water infrastructure

While the challenges facing drinking water infrastructure in Flint and other large cities have received much attention recently, much less is known about the status of drinking water infrastructure in other communities across Michigan. In Spring 2016, the Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS), an on-going census survey of local government leaders across the state, asked local leaders about their jurisdictions' water systems. We surveyed the top official in all of Michigan's 1,856 local governments (76% response rate). We found a few key findings that illustrate the utility of this data. First, local governments with shared systems listed aging and breaking pipes (37% of jurisdictions), affordability/bill delinquency (26%), and water source safety (17%) as the top problems facing their water systems. These results can be cross-tabulated with other jurisdictional characteristics. For example, in communities that listed water affordability as a problem, 50% had high, 37% medium, and 21% low fiscal stress. This data can also be combined with public opinion data, such as how local officials' perceptions compare to the general public. Researchers, practitioners, and others can contact me to access this data to complement their work.

Additional Resources

- The Michigan Public Policy Survey - mpps.umich.edu/
- Horner, D., Ivacko, T., and Mills, S. (2016). "Local government leaders' views on drinking water and water supply infrastructure in Michigan communities." Available at: <http://closup.umich.edu/files/mpps-water-governance-2016.pdf>
- Fisher, R. and Wassmer, R. (2015, April 27). A (Baker's) Dozen Years of State and Local Government Capital Investment. Falls Church, VA: State Tax Notes. Retrieved from: http://www.csus.edu/ppa/about/in_the_community/2015/wassmerfisherntjtaxnotes4_27_2015.pdf