

Carter, Jackie Q

From: Carter, Jackie Q
Sent: Friday, September 12, 2025 6:15 PM
To: Burgelis, Peter
Cc: Urban, Kristin; Knickerbocker, Andrea; Danyus, Amber
Subject: Flood Pay Study - Immediate Concerns

Dear Alderman Burgelis,

Thank you for meeting with our DER staff last week to discuss your proposal for providing additional compensation to DPW, DNS and MHD employees who were involved in the recent flood response. While I very much appreciate the intent behind this request, after further analysis and discussions with staff, I have substantial concerns about its application. I have outlined these concerns below.

- **Scale of Response.** The hours and workload of many employees citywide, including those outside of the DPW, DNS, and MHD, increased due to the response needed to serve our residents effectively and efficiently, and due to the flooding sustained by City properties and equipment. Accordingly, capturing and quantifying the titles and hours dedicated to this effort would be challenging and would create inequities among our employee groups, as we observed when Hazard Pay was granted to certain employee groups during the COVID-19 response. Notably, as City employees continue to work on flood response efforts, limiting the time to a specific period also poses a challenge.

Additionally, employees from various City departments were personally affected by the flood and continued to work despite the ongoing damage to their properties, which likely resulted in additional personal expenses for them.

- **Compensation.** Based upon preliminary figures from the DPW Operations Division alone, over \$700,000 in unanticipated overtime has been spent on flood relief efforts. DPW Operations - Sanitation and Forestry employees received emergency overtime during the flood response, meaning they received overtime pay for working more than eight hours in a day. A base hourly wage supplement would increase overtime costs already sustained, as well as the related roll-ups (e.g., pension).
- **Emergency Response as Part of Job Duties.** Establishing bonus pay for responses to natural disasters would set a precedent and expectation for future emergency events. City employees have worked a substantial number of continuous hours during emergency events in the past, including when hundreds of City trees were impacted by damaging winds during the summer of 2021. For this reason, working during emergency events is a condition of employment in job descriptions for positions in many City departments, including the DPW and MHD; this is an expectation of serving as a City of Milwaukee employee.

Please know that I am grateful for your effort to honor our employees, but the challenge in determining which employees would receive a wage supplement, the inequities in giving the supplement to some employees over others, and the fact that emergency response is a fundamental part of most employees' jobs make this proposal difficult for the DER to support at this time.

I would be happy to discuss this further with you at your convenience.

Respectfully,

Jackie Q. Carter

Port Director

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