



# CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF BREITUNG

## Department of Public Works

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## Press Release:

# Breitung Township's East Kingsford Water System Income Survey

WSSN 1980

Jay Davis, Superintendent of Public Works, Water Operator in Charge

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Funding may become available for water system improvements in the East Kingsford Water System (EKWS). These improvements will benefit both Residential and Commercial users.

Breitung Township with the support of Rural Development and help from the Great Lakes Community Action Partnership (GLCAP) will be sending a letter out to each residential customer on the East Kingsford Water System. Along with the letter is a demographic survey specifically for household income. Completing the survey will facilitate cost savings for future water projects.

“We want to create an independent Water Supply for those in East Kingsford. We currently purchase our water from the City of Kingsford. We have no control over their pricing structure, service or water usage fees. We are trying to source funds for the necessary improvements to include replacing the old water mains and upgrading the system with minimal impact on water customers' rates.

The households in East Kingsford will be receiving a confidential survey to document their annual household income, again, this survey is **CONFIDENTIAL**. The survey will be returned to GLCAP in Ishpeming. They will consolidate the information and pass the median household income of users on the EKWS through to US Department of Agriculture (**USDA**) **Rural Development** and Michigan Department of Environment Great Lakes and Energy (**EGLE**).

“This survey is helpful for our funding sources and obtaining any available principal forgiveness loans for the cost of the much-needed improvements.” said Jay Davis, Superintendent of Public Works. “If we have a successful return of completed surveys, we could qualify for forgiveness funds which would give us the ability to have a larger water project with considerable upgrades to the system”

EKWS users are a small percent of the overall township. The water system services 468 homes and approximately 1404 residents. Parts of the existing system go back as far as the 1920's. The Township currently purchases water from the City of Kingsford. With an independent Water Supply, we would no longer need to purchase water, we could install new water well(s), a water tank and replace aged water mains. We will continue changing out the lead goose neck connections and service lines.

A specific demographic income survey of the water district customers could allow the Township to tap potential funding sources. The accuracy of the survey is vitally important to the potential funding availability. As customers within the EKWS, it is imperative you return your survey.

The water systems in Breitung Township are not funded by tax dollars. The money generated from the water bills must cover the cost of the water system. The water account is a stand-alone fund, also known as an enterprise fund. State Law does not allow for the use of tax dollars to operate this fund. The income is generated from customers like you, paying your water bills. The expenses are payments to purchase water, materials for repairs to watermains and lines, along with the cost of labor and equipment to get the job done.

In 2023, 28 million gallons of water was purchased from the City of Kingsford. The amount of water resale was only 16 million. The water loss is due to old infrastructure and water main breaks. Last year, water loss for the water district was 42%. This number is high compared to the national average and costly to the system users.

The returned survey might allow us to create our own water source and reservoir to better serve the residents. The importance of this survey cannot be overstated. Replacement of water main lines is currently beyond the capability of the existing funds available. Further, it is the goal of the township to provide our residents with a safe, clean, reliable, and affordable water service.