

**Statement by Progressive Democrats of America's National Director,
Tim Carpenter: www.pdamerica.org**

As a progressive organization upholding progressive values at all levels of government, Progressive Democrats of America on principle oppose the sale, lease, &/or transfer of the Akron sewer system or any other publicly held utility, just as PDA opposes the privatization of other public assets. As allies of the Sierra Club, we strongly support their principles specific to the sale or lease of public sewer systems, which states:

***Privatization of Municipal Water/Sewer Systems** - Municipal water/sewer systems are essential public services and should not be privatized by transferring ownership from the public sector to a commercial entity or by allowing extensions of public systems to be owned by a commercial entity.*

If a municipality or other government entity considers partial privatization by using private contractors to operate the publicly-owned water/sewer system or any facility within the system or to build and operate any publicly-owned facility, including a desalination facility, any such decision should (a) be preceded by full public disclosure; (b) provide clear evidence that the contracted services could not be provided as cost-effectively by the municipality or other government entity and will not contribute to sprawl, (c) provide for continued public oversight and accountability to safeguard public health and to ensure compliance with environmental laws; (d) give sufficient time and opportunity for public debate; and (e) include a public vote to approve or disapprove the governing body proceeding with a contract pertaining to the municipal system as a whole or to any major facility in the system.

Any contract thus approved should hold the private contractor responsible for strict compliance with environmental laws and regulations; should be in keeping with principles of environmental justice and public trust; should provide for cancellation of the contract without penalty to citizens or communities if contract terms are violated; and should ensure corporate accountability to the people who are served.

None of the above being met in a substantive way, we stand firm in our belief that privatization of public utilities runs counter to the basic progressive principle that the common good of the people must be protected over private interests, particularly where the drive for shareholder profit impedes the public good.

For these clear reasons, PDA supports PDA-Ohio and its other members of Citizens SOS (Save Our Sewer and Water) efforts to defeat Akron's Issue 8 and their hard work through petition initiative to get Issue 9 onto the ballot and passed, to prevent any future sale, lease, transfer of any Akron utility without a vote of the people. Progressive Democrats of America supports Issue 9, direct democracy, and the progressive value of self governing.