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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DeKalb Finalizes Release of 37,000 ‘Held’ Water Bills

All 194,000 customers return to normal billing cycle

DECATUR, Ga. – DeKalb County CEO Michael Thurmond announced that the final batch of approximately 37,000 held water bills has been released. The remaining 1,300 held bills were released the week of March 19 and all county water and sewer customers have returned to a normal billing cycle.

Only 253, or less one percent, of the 37,000 validated bills are currently in the dispute process.

“Resolving the problems associated with the water billing crisis is a major step toward restoring public trust and rebuilding confidence in our billing process,” said CEO Thurmond. “Less than one percent of customers who had bills held remain in dispute with the county. That is significant progress.”

Last year, CEO Thurmond initiated the New Day Project to resolve the county’s longstanding water billing crisis after normal billing was suspended for approximately 37,000 of the county’s water and sewer customers in December 2016.

The New Day Project identified problems in the water billing process that led to inaccurate billing and meter readings, and a systemic failure of leadership, management and oversight. Held bills were released in phases after completing a thorough independent verification process that included manually reviewing customer accounts and field validating water meters.

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With support from the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, the New Day Project made significant water billing improvements in staffing, customer service and technology. This year, the county increased call center staffing and reduced average customer service wait times by more than four minutes. A verification process to independently expedite the review of customer accounts, water consumption and billing data was also created and the county started the process of replacing aging and defective water meters and implementing a new utility billing system.

“I want to thank the board of commissioners, and a dedicated, cross-departmental group of employees for coming together over the past fifteen months and working tirelessly to solve these complex and frustrating issues,” said CEO Thurmond.

Customers with held water bills will not be penalized for county errors. For more information or questions about water billing, customers are encouraged to call 404-378-4475.

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