

**Interfaith Coalition to Restore the Water Fee Exemption
For Religious Institutions**

Dear Alderman _____:

Ward: _____

My congregation is part of a growing interfaith coalition in your ward seeking your support. We are requesting that you, other City Council members and Mayor Rahm Emanuel permanently restore the water fee exemption for our religious institutions that was removed during the 2012 budget process.

Religious institutions, associated schools and ministries spend hundreds of millions of dollars in the City of Chicago, educating, feeding, housing, protecting and helping citizens, especially those affected by street violence. We offer local police beats, at no charge, a place to house their patrols; open our halls, gyms and kitchens to families and youth in the community so that they can be safe from gang activity and have a much needed meal. We are most often the essential member of the community network, without which disintegration begins and accelerates. We represent faith, hope, charity, transcendent spirit and the highest ideals of community well-being. The examples are endless, the value incalculable, yet the City Council action that was passed in November 2011 will result in deficits that will severely impact our ability to continue serving the community in these capacities.

The water fee exemption is a critical accommodation as are other current exemptions. The benefits of this exemption to government prove significantly greater than the actual amount of fees collected. We urge you to join forces with the religious institutions in your Ward and support the amendment of the city budget.

Sincerely,

Religious Institution

____/____/_____
Date