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Jackson's Water and the Crisis of Municipal Governance.

Is privatization a solution?

["Jackson's Water Woes Explained"](#) (Review & Outlook, Sept. 6) gets to the core conflict of interest for municipally owned utilities. We've seen it across the country and now in Jackson, Miss. Utilities, as natural monopolies, are generators of cash and a convenient bank for other municipal activity. When they set rates and terms of operation, free of supervision by independent regulators, they maximize revenue and minimize investment in maintenance and upgrades.

It's time to consider the privatization of water. In the end, it costs less.

Both Jackson and Flint, Mich., are shrinking cities with high poverty rates, but the poor infrastructure condition in both was caused by years of neglect. The water industry knows how to address the neglect, and money is needed, but experience shows that leadership and workforce capacity go far even when money is scarce. Building this capacity starts with local elected officials who pay attention to public services, not just trendy politics.

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The Wall Street Journal

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