



**Madeira Legal Action Against Indian Hill
Frequently Asked Questions
February 27, 2026**

Why is Madeira transitioning to Greater Cincinnati Water Works?

This decision is about protecting both public health and household budgets. After a year and a half of study and comparison, Madeira City Council decided that Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW) is the best long-term option to protect residents' health and keep water expenses more affordable.

One major factor was cost. Madeira households would have paid significantly more to remain on Indian Hill Water Works. For a typical household, monthly water bills under Indian Hill's rates were projected to be roughly 20 to 25 percent higher than under Greater Cincinnati Water Works. Over time, that difference adds up.

Another key consideration was PFAS, sometimes referred to as "forever chemicals." Greater Cincinnati Water Works has already made the necessary investments to remediate the chemicals. Indian Hill would need to build new treatment facilities to comply with regulations, which would increase costs and add financial risk for customers.

Does Madeira have the legal authority to transition away from Indian Hill Water Works?

Yes. Madeira's water agreement with Indian Hill allows either party to end the arrangement with proper notice. In November 2025, Madeira formally exercised that right and provided notice of termination, initiating a two-year transition period.

During that time, Madeira continues to meet its obligations while planning for a smooth service transition. Choosing a different long-term water provider is a policy decision within the City's legal authority and does not require approval from Indian Hill.

Disagreement with that decision does not change the terms of the agreement or override public records laws that apply during the transition process.

Did Madeira sign a 20-year water supply agreement extension with Indian Hill in 2023?

In 2023, City Council approved an amendment to adjust the surcharge paid by Madeira residents from 25% to 41%. This surcharge helps pay for the replacement and maintenance of Madeira's own water mains and infrastructure, the pipe that delivers water to our residents. The amendment includes the same termination provisions as the original 2012 agreement.

Subsequently, in 2024 Indian Hill approached Madeira and requested a new 30-year contract that would have imposed new charges on residents to help offset the costs of PFAS remediation. It was these increased costs and presence of forever chemicals that prompted City Council to seek a proposal from GCWW.

Why is Madeira suing Indian Hill?

Madeira took legal action because Indian Hill has refused to provide public records that are required by law and has tied cooperation to demands for payments that are not part of the water agreement. Indian Hill has asked Madeira to agree to additional costs, with estimates reaching as high as \$13 million, before sharing information or working through the transition.

Madeira tried for months to resolve this cooperatively but could not get the basic system information needed to move forward. The City does not want this to become a public spectacle. The lawsuit is intended to obtain clear guidance from the court on what the contract actually requires, so the transition can proceed legally, efficiently and without service disruptions.

What is the timeline for the transition?

Madeira provided notice of termination in November 2025, beginning a two-year transition period. All Madeira residents will be served by Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW) once the process is complete.

What about fire protection concerns?

The Madeira Indian Hill Joint Fire District previously identified the potential for hydrant pressure impacts in limited areas of Indian Hill.

Since then, Indian Hill mailed a letter to its water customers stating: *“Please know that this issue will not affect your water supply in any way.”* We appreciate that reassurance to residents.

Madeira has always taken fire protection concerns seriously and remains committed to working collaboratively on a practical, cost-effective solution if one is needed.

At the same time, developing an informed and responsible solution requires access to records that show existing infrastructure conditions and associated costs. Without that information, it is difficult to fully evaluate options or ensure that any proposed approach is fair and effective for both communities.

Is Madeira paying for upgrades in Indian Hill?

Madeira has a long history of working cooperatively with Indian Hill, including more than 70 years of partnership on water service. That history matters, and the City wants to continue being a constructive partner.

At the same time, being a good partner does not mean writing a blank check. Madeira cannot commit to open-ended financial obligations, particularly without access to the records needed to fully understand infrastructure conditions and costs.

First and foremost, the City has a responsibility to the families and businesses who pay taxes in Madeira. Any future investments must be clearly defined, legally justified and fair to both communities.

Why involve the courts at all?

Madeira would prefer to resolve this quietly. For several months, the City pursued this matter through informal and formal public records requests and repeated attempts to work collaboratively with Indian Hill. Unfortunately, those efforts did not produce the information needed to move forward responsibly.

The courts provide a neutral way to resolve disagreements about public records and contract requirements. Seeking judicial clarity helps remove uncertainty and allows the transition process to move forward in a structured and lawful way.

Madeira has intentionally kept this action narrow and focused. We remain hopeful that reasonable cooperation can still be reached and that both communities can move forward in a way that protects residents, supports the joint fire district and avoids unnecessary conflict.

What records is Madeira requesting from Indian Hill?

Madeira is requesting basic public records needed to ensure a safe and smooth transition of water service. These include:

- Maps and records showing water mains, connections and flow paths
- Fire hydrant and water pressure testing and related reports
- PFAS testing results and regulatory compliance records
- Consultant studies and technical reports used to evaluate system impacts and costs

This information is standard for public water systems and is necessary to avoid service interruptions and address fire protection concerns.

Can Indian Hill withhold records because it disagrees with Madeira's decision?

No. Public records laws apply regardless of policy disagreements.

Does this lawsuit affect water service right now?

No. Water service continues as normal. The purpose of this legal action is to make sure the transition can be planned safely and responsibly so there are no service interruptions in the future.

Is Madeira asking the court to stop the transition?

No. Madeira is moving forward with the transition to Greater Cincinnati Water Works as planned. The City is asking the court to clarify the contract and require compliance with public records laws so the transition can proceed lawfully and efficiently.

Is Madeira trying to avoid paying its fair share of costs?

No. Madeira is willing to work collaboratively on reasonable, clearly defined costs. What the City is challenging are open-ended payment demands that are not included in the water agreement and are being used as a condition for cooperation and transparency.

Why does Madeira need these records now?

The transition involves planning for water flow, fire protection and system reliability. Without access to existing system records, it is difficult to fully evaluate options, costs or impacts and ensure residents in both communities remain protected.

Will this cost Madeira taxpayers more money?

The City's goal is to protect taxpayers by avoiding unnecessary or undefined costs. Seeking clarity now helps prevent larger financial risks later and supports a more cost-effective transition.

Is Madeira still willing to work with Indian Hill?

Yes. Madeira remains open to cooperation and has repeatedly expressed a willingness to work collaboratively. The City hopes that transparency and good-faith cooperation can still be achieved.

* * * * *