



News & Notes

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Water Conservation Policies Spark Concern

The Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Water Resources Commission (WRC) are considering several changes to the state's water conservation policies that may restrict the amount of water that can be withdrawn from surface and ground waters. Specifically, the agencies are considering a proposed water conservation standard of 65 residential gallons per capita day (rgpcd) that would affect a large number of water supply systems, as WRC's 2001 Stressed River Basin Report classifies the majority of rivers assessed as high or medium stressed. These restrictions could impose heavy limitations on water use, even leading to permanent outdoor watering bans in some communities. Although the Advisory Board believes MWRA water communities may fall outside the 65 rgpcd requirement, many communities will be forced to abide by strict water-use guidelines.

The origins of stress on a basin vary from location to location and conservation needs cannot be accurately assessed through a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Furthermore, many would argue that a 65 rgpcd limit is too stringent as various literature sources cite the average indoor household water use in a non-conserving home as varying from 60 to 69 rgpcd. To reduce indoor water use to be a conserving home, the purchase of water saving appliances such as low-flow toilets and water efficient washing machines and dishwashers would be required.

As discussion continues among public water suppliers, the Advisory Board will monitor EOEA, DEP and WRC action closely in this regard. Public hearings and solicitation of the public's comments are expected later this year. In the meantime, please feel free to contact the office with any questions or for additional information.

Advisory Board Debuts New Web Site

The Advisory Board has updated its web site, complete with new web address. Please visit www.mwraadvisoryboard.com to read more about the issues facing MWRA ratepayers.

Ratepayers Mourn Loss of True Champion

Ratepayers across the MWRA system lost a friend and ally last week in the death of Senator Charles E. Shannon (D-Winchester) who passed away on Tuesday, April 5th, from complications associated with leukemia. Senator Shannon, who represented Winchester, Somerville and Medford, fought tirelessly on behalf of ratepayers, championing efforts such as Debt Service Assistance and watershed protection.

"Ratepayers have lost a tireless advocate and a good friend," said Joseph Favaloro, Executive Director of the Advisory Board. "Charlie lead the charge in the Senate for us and I will miss him both personally and professionally."

During his 14-year term in the Senate, Senator Shannon served on several powerful committees, representing ratepayers at the highest levels of state government, including the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. In his comments about Senator Shannon, Senate President Robert Travaglini noted his unwavering commitment to MWRA rate relief, adding that, "a powerful voice for the people of the Second Middlesex District has been silenced."

Senator Shannon died of complications from his third bout with cancer. He was 61 years old.

MWRA Bonds Upgraded

Last month both Fitch Ratings and Moody's Investors Services raised their ratings of MWRA's general revenue refunding bonds. Fitch Ratings raised its rating to AA from AA- citing MWRA's, "demonstrated ability to manage a complex Capital Improvement Program" and Moody's Investors Service raised its rating to Aa2 from Aa3 noting, "management's demonstrated ability to budget conservatively and to limit growth in operating expenditures." Additionally, Standard and Poor's reaffirmed the MWRA's rating of AA stable.

According to the MWRA, the bonds were sold at a premium to refund \$424 million of bonds, resulting in a present value savings to the MWRA of \$20 million over the next 30 years, or 4.74%.

Representative Petrucci Is New Vice-Chair of MWRA Caucus

The Advisory Board is pleased to announce that Representative Anthony Petrucci (D-Boston) has accepted the position of Vice-Chair of the MWRA Legislative Caucus. Representative Petrucci has served the First Suffolk District, which is comprised of parts of Boston and the Harbor Islands, since 1999. He also serves as House Chairman of the Joint Committee on Election Laws.

Upcoming Meetings/Events

April 13--	MWRA Board of Directors Meeting	10:00am in Charlestown
April 22--	Executive Committee Meeting	8:30am at Advisory Board office
April 28--	Advisory Board CEB public hearing (rescheduled)	11:30 am in Newton
April 28--	Advisory Board Meeting	11:30am in Newton
May 3--	Operations Committee Meeting	10:00am MWRA-Chelsea

If you have any questions regarding topics raised in this newsletter or any other MWRA issue, please contact:

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