

# THE ANNAPOLIS OBSERVER



General Assembly Passes Local WSSC Water Legislation: Prior to their adjournment of *Sine Die* on Monday, the Maryland General Assembly passed [HB 399](#) *Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Minority Business Enterprise Utilization Program – Termination Extension (PG/MC 105-22)*; [HB 400](#) *Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Hiring and Promotion Preferences – Veterans and Their Spouses (PG/MC 106-22)*; and [HB 526](#) *Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Plumbing and Fuel Gas Services – Licenses and Penalties (PG/MC 109-22)*. All three bills will be sent to the Governor for his consideration to sign them into law.

The Maryland General Assembly Adjourns Sine Die: On Monday, April 11<sup>th</sup> at midnight, the Maryland General Assembly wrapped up their 444<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session and adjourned *Sine Die*. The 2022 Session brought some normalcy back to Annapolis as the Senate held in-person public hearings for the first time in two years. Legislators introduced 2,500 pieces of legislation for consideration during the 90-day Session. The General Assembly will convene for their 445<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session at noon on January 11, 2023.

WSSC Water Celebrates Successful Session: WSSC Water's **Intergovernmental Relations Office (IRO)** had another successful Session with three bills supported by the Commission passed and awaiting signature at the Governor's desk. In addition to tracking nearly 300 bills, they collaborated with trade organizations and stakeholders to advocate for and against other statewide bills impacting the Commission.

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## Legislative Updates

Please find below the status of the three WSSC Water sponsored bills:

[HB 399](#) *Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Minority Business Enterprise Utilization Program – Termination Extension (PG/MC105-22)*, extends the statutory authority for the WSSC Minority Business Enterprise Utilization (MBE) Program for a period of one year ending on June 30, 2023. The bill was passed by the General Assembly and awaits action by the Governor. The law becomes effective on June 1, 2022.

[HB 400](#) *Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Hiring and Promotion Preferences – Veterans and Their Spouses (PG/MC 106-22)*, repeals the current statute pertaining to the WSSC Water competitive selection process for appointments of veterans and adopts the processes utilized by the State of Maryland. The bill passed the General Assembly unanimously and awaits action by the Governor. The law becomes effective on October 1, 2022.

[HB 526](#) *Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Plumbing and Fuel Gas Services – Licenses and Penalties, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Plumbing and Fuel Gas Services – Licenses and Penalties (PG/MC 109-22)*, authorizes WSSC Water, in addition to other penalties, to impose a penalty not exceeding \$5,000 for each violation to persons who violate provisions of the WSSC Plumbing and Fuel Gas Code or State Law. The bill was passed by the General Assembly and awaits action by the Governor. The law becomes effective on October 1, 2022.

Find the status and position on WSSC Water-related bills in our [Legislative Update](#).

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# Around WSSC Water

## WSSC Water April Commission Meeting

The monthly Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 20, 2022 starting at 10 a.m. Access the link and agenda [here](#).

The [meeting will be virtual](#); however, interested stakeholders can provide input during the public comment portion of the meeting by calling 240.800.7929/Conference ID: 831 521 992#. The public comment period will start shortly after 10 a.m.

## Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)

The MD Department of Human Resources just launched *Low Income Household Water Assistance Program* (LIHWAP), a water assistance program to provide funds to assist low income households pay past due water/sewer bills!

Eligible households can receive between \$100 and \$2,000 in assistance. Funds are limited so please apply today using one of the following methods:

- Online at the Maryland Department of Human Services website: [www.dhs.maryland.gov/ohep](http://www.dhs.maryland.gov/ohep)
- In-person at the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Office located at 1301 Piccard Drive, Rockville, MD 20850
- In-person at the Prince George's County Department of Social Services Office located at 425 Brightseat Road, Landover, MD 20785

For more information, please see flyers in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

## Maryland Board of Public Works Approves More than \$22 Million in Loans and Grants to WSSC Water

On Tuesday, April 6, 2022, the Maryland Board of Public Works (BPW) approved more than \$22 million in loans and grants to WSSC Water to help Maryland's largest water utility continue its efforts to protect local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay.

An estimated \$15 million will help fund the ongoing design and construction of WSSC Water's [Piscataway Bioenergy](#) facility in Accokeek, Maryland, in Prince George's County. Construction on the \$271 million project began in spring 2019 and is expected to be substantially complete by November 2024.

The Bay Restoration Fund Grants totaling an estimated \$7.7 million, will help fund WSSC Water's Sewer Reconstruction Program. The comprehensive program replaces and rehabilitates pipes and manholes in areas where sewer mains leak, have become damaged, or have reached the end of their useful life.

Please click [here](#) to get further information and learn more about the projects.

## Keep The Wipes Out of The Pipes!

Flushing certain items down the toilet can lead to problems for WSSC Water and you! Non-flushable items, such as baby wipes or feminine hygiene products do not break apart like toilet paper. These items can get stuck in your pipes or our pipes. If that happens, sewage will back up in your basement or overflow from one of our manholes, impacting the environment. Please click [here](#) to learn more about how to protect your pipes and what is flushable and safe for your pipes.

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## Customer Assistance and the Water Fund

WSSC Water remains committed to making water/sewer bills more affordable. We want to do everything in our power to help you avoid a water service turnoff and ensure our safe, clean water continues to flow to your tap. Learn more at [WSSC Water's Customer Assistance Programs](#).

Customers may also help by making a tax-deductible donation to [The Water Fund](#) to help more neighbors have access to clean, safe water. Since 1994, the fund has helped nearly 20,000 people throughout Montgomery and Prince George's counties. The Water Fund is administered by The Salvation Army. Every dollar of your donation goes directly to local families who need financial assistance paying their water/sewer bills. Click [here](#) to learn more and donate online.

## CUSTOMER ADVOCATES

Our Customer Advocates are in your communities every day, carrying out their mission to serve as liaisons between you and WSSC Water, and ensuring that we are providing a high level of customer service.

*Northern Prince George's County (areas north of Central Avenue, MD 214)*

**David Wilkins**

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**Brandon Stewart**

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Find your Customer Advocate [here](#).

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## Calendar

- April 20, 2022 – WSSC Water Commissioners Meeting. Complete agenda with links to all presentations, as well as the virtual public meeting can be accessed [here](#).
  - June 1, 2022 – Other than emergency bills and as otherwise provided, earliest date for bills to take effect
  - July 1, 2022 – Budgetary, tax, and revenue bills to take effect
  - October 1, 2022 – Usual effective date for bills
  - January 11, 2023 – 445<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session convenes
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## Related Links

[Maryland General Assembly](#)

- [Session Calendar \(PDF\)](#)
- [Track Legislation](#)

[Montgomery County Delegation](#)

[Prince George's County Delegation](#)

[Maryland Association of Counties](#)

[Maryland Municipal League](#)

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# About IRO

WSSC Water's **Intergovernmental Relations Office (IRO)** team works to promote the *value of water* and the *value of WSSC Water*, engage *federal, state, county and local government* and elected stakeholders and advocate for WSSC Water's strategic interests and priorities; and foster *relationships* with organizations and promote collaborative interests.

In Annapolis, the IRO team works with members to support administratively and fiscally responsible legislation, in addition to championing policy that benefits all water utilities throughout Maryland. WSSC Water is committed to increased statewide investment in water and wastewater infrastructure and sound regulatory initiatives.

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## Meet the IRO Team

**Karyn Riley, Esq.** – *IRO Director*

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## Contact Us

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Please click [here](#) for a printable sheet of our key contacts.



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For over 100 years, WSSC Water has proudly served the citizens of Prince George's and Montgomery counties – providing drinking water that has always met strict Safe Drinking Water Act standards and protecting the environment through vital water resource recovery services. Our vision is to be THE world-class water utility, where excellent products and services are always on tap. [www.wsscwater.com](http://www.wsscwater.com)