



### **A Note from WSSC Water's Intergovernmental Relations Office (IRO):**

The Senators and Delegates were very busy last week submitting their legislative proposals before bill introduction dates of February 7<sup>th</sup> (Senate) and February 11<sup>th</sup> (House). Any bill introduced after these dates are referred to the respective Rules Committee. To date, legislators have introduced 2,326 bills for consideration.

One bill of interest to WSSC Water is [SB 755](#) – *Infrastructure Grants – Federal Infrastructure Investment and Coordination Unit – Established*, which creates a Federal Infrastructure Investment and Coordination Unit in the Governor's Grants Office. The Unit will be tasked with tracking federal infrastructure grants and assisting State agencies in the award of the grants under the Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021.

In other news, the Maryland Senate will begin conducting their committee business with direct in-person public interaction beginning on February 14, 2022. Senate President Bill Ferguson issued a [memorandum](#) on February 8<sup>th</sup> outlining the protocols for the chamber's return to in-person hearings for the first time in nearly two years. The House of Delegates will continue to conduct their committee hearing virtually.

WSSC Water's **Intergovernmental Relations Office (IRO)** advocates for legislation that helps WSSC Water fulfill our mission to provide safe and reliable water, life's most precious resource, and return clean water to our environment, all in an ethical, sustainable, and financially responsible manner.

*The Annapolis Observer* is IRO's weekly update on happenings in Annapolis and provides updates on key bills of interest to WSSC Water.

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## **Legislative Updates**

As all three WSSC Water sponsored bills have passed unanimously out of the House Delegations of Montgomery and Prince George's counties. Please see the bill hearing schedule below:

[HB 399 \(PG/MC 105-22\)](#) *Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Minority Business Enterprise Utilization Program – Termination Extension*. (House Health and Government Operations Committee on 2/8/2022)

[HB 400 \(PG/MC 106-22\)](#) *Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Hiring and Promotion Preferences – Veterans and Their Spouses*. (House Environment and Transportation Committee on 2/15/2022 at 1:00 PM)

[HB 526 \(PG/MC 109-22\)](#) *Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Plumbing and Fuel Gas Services – Licenses and Penalties*. (House Economic Matters Committee on 2/22/2022 at 1:00 PM)

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

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## **Around WSSC Water**

## One Water Regional Art Contest

Calling all high school-aged artists! Help WSSC Water highlight the importance of protecting our source water by submitting artwork focused on one or all of the following themes:

- The connection between human actions on land impacting water quality
- A community's connection to local waterways – in terms of drinking water sources as well as places for recreation and enjoyment
- The role of water utilities to protect our sources of water through environmental stewardship and responsible wastewater treatment

One grand prize winner in each category will receive \$100 in April. The two winners will have their work entered in a regional contest with other Washington, D.C. metro-area water and wastewater utilities. **Submissions are due by Friday, March 18, 2022.** Get complete details at [wsscwater.com/artcontest](http://wsscwater.com/artcontest).

## WSSC Water February Commission Meeting

The monthly Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 16, 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: 306 934 407#. The public comment period will start shortly after 10 a.m.

## Residents Should Prepare for More Water Main Breaks as Potomac River Temperature Hits New Seasonal Low

Montgomery and Prince George's County residents should prepare for increased water main breaks and leaks as the [Potomac River hits a new low temperature this winter](#). The river temperature has dropped about 18 degrees since the beginning of January.

As a reminder, WSSC Water maintains the pipes in the streets and the connections up to the property line. If a pipe in a home freezes, it is the homeowner's responsibility to repair. Residents are urged to visit [www.wsscwater.com/winterready](http://www.wsscwater.com/winterready) to learn tips on what they can do to help winterize their homes, or to prepare for the sudden loss of water due to a break.

There are three simple ways to report a break or leak to WSSC Water's 24-hour Emergency Services Center:

- Phone: 301-206-4002
- Email: [emergencycenter@wsscwater.com](mailto:emergencycenter@wsscwater.com)
- Via [WSSC Water's Mobile App](#).

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## Customer Assistance and the Water Fund

Sadly, approximately one in five customers is past due on their bills. WSSC Water remains committed to making water and sewer bills more affordable by offering financial assistance programs. We want to help customers 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](#).

You 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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*Southern Prince George's County (areas south of Central Avenue, MD 214)*

**Stephen Billingsley**

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*Montgomery County*

**Brandon Stewart**

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301-642-1712

Find your Customer Advocate [here](#).

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## Calendar

- March 21, 2022 – Crossover
  - April 3, 2022 – Budget bill to be passed by both Chambers
  - April 11, 2022 – Sine Die
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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)