



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

Maryland lawmakers have (virtually) hit the ground running and began bill hearings during the first full week of the General Assembly's 444<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session. To date, legislators have introduced 685 bills for consideration. On Wednesday, Governor Larry Hogan presented his recorded setting [\\$58.2 billion budget](#) which bolsters the state's rainy day fund to record levels, provides tax relief to retirees and working families, and expands relief to vulnerable Marylanders. Senate and House members in the Budget & Taxation and Appropriations committees will now begin their work to pass a balanced budget by early April.

WSSC Water's **Intergovernmental Relations Office (IRO)** is on the frontline advocating for legislation that impacts our work. IRO covers a variety of subject matters and focuses on 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 highlights the progress of key bills and updates of interest to WSSC Water.

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## **Legislative Updates**

On January 21<sup>st</sup>, the Prince George's County House Delegation voted unanimously to pass [PG/MC 105-22](#) *Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Minority Business Enterprise Utilization Program – Termination Extension* and [PG/MC 106-22](#) *Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Hiring and Promotion Preferences – Veterans and Their Spouses*, Favorable. These bills will now move to the House Environment and Transportation Committee for consideration.

The Montgomery County House Delegation also met on January 21<sup>st</sup> and voted unanimously to pass [PG/MC 109-22](#) *Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Plumbing and Fuel Gas Services – Licenses and Penalties*, Favorable. This bill will now move to the Prince George's County Delegation for consideration.

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

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## **Around WSSC Water**

### **As Temperatures Drop, Water Main Breaks Increase**

As colder temperatures settle into the region, WSSC Water crews are prepared for the increase in breaks and leaks with people, pipes, trucks and tools at the ready. Every year, WSSC Water responds to approximately 1,800 water main breaks; 1,200 of them between the months of November and February.

WSSC Water experiences an increase in water main breaks and leaks a few days after the temperature of the Potomac River hits a new low. The river is the primary source of drinking water for 1.9 million WSSC Water customers in Montgomery and Prince George's counties. When a new low temperature is reached, the colder water can shock pipes, increasing the number of breaks and leaks.

Customers are encouraged to report water main breaks and leaks as quickly as possible.

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

- By phone: 301-206-4002
- By email: [emergencycallcenter@wsscwater.com](mailto:emergencycallcenter@wsscwater.com)
- Via [WSSC Water's Mobile App](#)

The *Report a Problem* feature on the mobile app allows customers to easily snap a picture of a possible water main break or leak and send it directly to the Emergency Services Center. The app uses GPS to pinpoint the location of the image, which allows dispatchers to send an inspector to the site.

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. For more information, including tips on what customers can do to help winterize their homes, visit [www.wsscwater.com/winterready](http://www.wsscwater.com/winterready).

### **WSSC Water FY 2023 Preliminary Proposed Budget Public Hearings**

WSSC Water will hold public hearings on February 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7 pm to receive comments on our \$1.59 billion preliminary proposed Fiscal Year 2023 operating and capital budget. This budget details the projects and initiatives we plan to undertake that will enable us to deliver safe, seamless and satisfying water services to our neighbors in Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

For instructions on how to view or participate virtually in the hearings, visit [wsscwater.com/fin](http://wsscwater.com/fin). Please contact WSSC Water as soon as possible at 301-206-8100 if your attendance at any of these hearings will require an accommodation under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The formal budget document can be found at [wsscwater.com/budget](http://wsscwater.com/budget).

Written comments can be submitted to [BudgetGroup@wsscwater.com](mailto:BudgetGroup@wsscwater.com), or mailed to Budget Division Manager, WSSC Water, 14501 Sweitzer Lane, Laurel, MD 20707 by February 15, 2022. The proposed budget must be submitted to both the Prince George's and Montgomery County Councils by March 1, 2022.

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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.

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## **Calendar**

- **January 20, 2022** – Prince George's County Bi-County Committee at 9 am
- **January 21, 2022** – Prince George's County House Delegation at 9 am and Montgomery House Delegation at 9:30 am
- **March 21, 2022** – Crossover
- **April 11, 2022** – Sine Die

## 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

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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)