



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

Maryland lawmakers have hit the ground running - virtually - during the first few weeks of The General Assembly's 442<sup>nd</sup> Legislative Session. To date, legislators have introduced 1,528 bills. Among these bills is the proposed [\\$49.35 billion budget](#) for Fiscal Year 2022 and the Governor's Recovery for the Economy, Livelihoods, Industries, Entrepreneurs, and Families ([RELIEF Act](#)), which seeks to provide more than \$1 billion in direct stimulus and tax relief for Maryland working families, small businesses, and those who have lost their jobs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As amended by the Budget & Taxation Committee, the legislation will include \$25 million for rental assistance.

Legislators have focused on proposing bills that center around assistance for residents and businesses impacted by the pandemic, educational funding, police reforms, and addressing health disparities in the State of Maryland.

WSSC Water's **Intergovernmental Relations Office (IRO)** will continue to advocate for legislation that supports WSSC Water's 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. IRO looks at all legislation that impacts WSSC Water's administrative, operational and financial capability.

*The Annapolis Observer* is **IRO's** weekly update on happenings in Annapolis and highlights the progress of key bills of interest to WSSC Water, as well as other information.

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## **Legislative Updates**

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

[MC/PG 100-21](#) – *Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Video Streaming and Archiving Meetings and Late Payment Charges*: SUPPORT w/ Amendment. Staff thanks the bill sponsor for the opportunity to work with them to address our concerns. The bill has passed the Montgomery County and Prince George's County House Delegations unanimously, and will be heard in the House Environment and Transportation Committee.

[MC/PG 102-21](#) – *Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Board of Ethics – Financial Disclosure Statements – Late Fees*: SUPPORT. The Montgomery County House Delegation and Prince George's County House Delegation unanimously passed this bill. This WSSC Water-sponsored bill will authorize the WSSC Water Board of Ethics to impose a fee to individuals who file late or fail to file a financial disclosure statement. The bill now moves to the House Environment and Transportation Committee for consideration.

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## **Around WSSC Water**

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

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed many aspects of our lives, but one constant for residents of the DMV remains: winter is water main break season. As colder temperatures settle into the region, WSSC Water crews are prepared for the increase in breaks and

leaks with people, pipes, trucks and 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. Crews have repaired over 380 breaks and leaks in December and are seeing a steady increase over the past few days due to the dropping temperatures.

WSSC Water experiences an increase in water main breaks and leaks as the temperature of the Potomac River falls. The river is the primary source of drinking water for 1.8 million WSSC Water customers in Montgomery and Prince George's counties. 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).

### **Public Hearings on WSSC Water's FY22 Preliminary Proposed Budget**

WSSC Water will hold two virtual public hearings to receive comments on our \$1.5 billion preliminary proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 operating and capital budget on February 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7:30 p.m. 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. The proposed budget must be submitted to both the Prince George's and Montgomery County Councils by March 1, 2021.

For complete budget details and instructions on how to view or participate virtually in the hearings, please visit: [wsscwater.com/fin](http://wsscwater.com/fin). 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 until February 15, 2021.

Please contact WSSC Water as soon as possible at 301-206-8200 if your attendance at any of these virtual hearings will require an accommodation under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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## Calendar

FY22 WSSC Water Preliminary Proposed Budget Public Hearings:

- February 2, 2021 – 7:30 p.m.
- February 3, 2021 – 7:30 p.m.

For instructions on how to view or participate virtually in the hearings, visit: [wsscwater.com/fin](http://wsscwater.com/fin).

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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

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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)

