



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

Friday, February 26th, marked the halfway point for the 2021 Maryland General Assembly's Legislative Session; to date, 2,307 bills have been introduced. Over the coming days, lawmakers will be working hard to pass bills out of their respective chambers prior to the March 22nd Crossover Date. In addition to vetting bills, the budgetary committees continue to host budget briefings as they work to pass a balanced budget for the upcoming 2022 fiscal year.

The House Environment and Transportation Committee will hold a bill hearing for [HB 789 \(MC/PG 100-21\)](#) – **Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Video Streaming and Archiving Meetings and Late Payment Charges** on Tuesday, March 2nd at 1:30 p.m. This bill requires WSSC Water to stream live video or teleconference audio or other audio of the open meetings of the Commission, and to maintain on our website a complete and unedited archived recording of livestreamed open meetings. HB 789 also adds a provision in the Customer Assistance Program statute that will expand the assistance we can provide to our most vulnerable customers.

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.

Legislative Updates

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

[HB 501 \(MC/PG 102-21\)](#) – **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 House Environment and Transportation Committee held the bill hearing for HB 501 on February 23rd.

[HB 561](#) – **Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Wastewater, Thermal, and Other Renewable Sources: SUPPORT**. HB 561 expands Tier 1 renewable energy sources in the State's Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard to include: methane from the anaerobic decomposition or organic materials in a landfill or wastewater treatment plant used to generate electricity, thermal energy, or mechanical energy; and raw or treated wastewater used as a heat source or sink for a heating or cooling system. The bill also allows producers of energy generated from wastewater heating or cooling systems to receive renewable energy credits. The House Economic Matters Committee held the bill hearing for HB 561 on January 29th.

[HB 789 \(MC/PG 100-21\)](#) – **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 unanimously passed the Montgomery County House and Senate Delegations, and the Prince George's County House Delegation. The House Environment and Transportation Committee will hold a bill hearing for HB 789 on March 2nd at 1:30 p.m.

Around WSSC Water

IBM Enters Second Phase of NIH Contract for Development of Verifiable Health Status Reporting and Contact Tracing – Selects WSSC Water to Pilot Innovative Technology to Enhance Employee Safety

Over the next months, IBM will work with WSSC Water, one of the largest water and wastewater utilities in the nation, serving 1.8 million residents in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area to pilot this program for employees based in their headquarters in Laurel, Maryland, expanding to other locations soon thereafter. This collaboration aims to demonstrate how these solutions can be used in large organizations and can enable the collection of valuable public health research data.

“WSSC Water was formed in 1918, during the last major pandemic to impact our nation,” said WSSC Water General Manager and CEO Carla A. Reid. “Thanks to our partnership with IBM and NIH, we are better positioned to leverage the latest technology to successfully respond to the current pandemic and enhance employee safety. Using a cloud-based tool instead of multiple paper processes will simplify our self-monitoring, reporting and contact tracing efforts – allowing our employees to spend more time focused on providing safe, seamless and satisfying water services to our customers.”

Specifically, an IBM Global Business Services team will deploy the use of [IBM Digital Health Pass](#), a digital health passport platform designed to combine multiple dynamic data sources – such as test results and onsite temperature scans in combination with contact tracing technology designed to help mitigate risk, take action when needed and communicate effectively. This will provide WSSC Water with verifiable health status, which can help them to make data-driven decisions while protecting health and personal identifiable information.

Calendar

- March 3: Bill Hearing – [HB 789 \(MC/PG 100-21\)](#) – **Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Video Streaming and Archiving Meetings and Late Payment Charges** – House Environment & Transportation Committee – 1:30 p.m.
 - March 22 : Crossover. Opposite Chamber bills received after this date are subject to referral to Rules Committees.
 - April 5 : 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](#)

Customer Assistance

[WSSC Water's Customer Assistance Programs](#)

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Find your Customer Advocate here: www.wsscwater.com/advocate

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.

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