



## A Note from WSSC Water's Intergovernmental Relations Office

The Senators and Delegates were busy last week submitting their legislative proposals before bill introduction dates of February 5th (Senate) and February 9th (House). Any bill introduced after these dates are referred to the respective Rules Committee. To date, legislators have introduced 2,573 bills for consideration.

IRO is on the front-line advocating for legislation that impacts our work. We cover a variety of subject matters and focus 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 events in Annapolis and highlights the progress of key bills of interest to WSSC Water, as well as provide timely updates and calendar of important dates.

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## Legislative Updates

WSSC Water has proposed one bill for the 2024 Legislative Session, [HB1024 - Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Connection Pipe Emergency Replacement Loan Program – Expansion](#). The proposed legislation will allow for the expansion of the Connection Pipe Emergency Replacement Loan Program authorized by Section 23-205 of the Maryland Annotated Code Public Utilities Article to include sewer service line repair or replacement, sewer line camera investigation or snaking, as well as increase the maximum loan amount to \$10,000.

Both the Prince George's County and Montgomery County Delegations voted in favor of the bill and it will now move to the House Environment and Transportation Committee.

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

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## Around WSSC Water

### WSSC Water is Winter Ready – Are You?

As colder temperatures settle into the region, water main breaks increase. However, WSSC Water crews are prepared for the increase in breaks and leaks with people, pipes, trucks and tools at the ready! 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. One of the nation's largest water utilities, WSSC Water spends approximately \$17 million each year for emergency water main repairs, with about \$10 million spent November through February.

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 mobile app: [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).

## Reminder to be Saltwise in Winter

Did you know using salt on walkways, driveways and roads is harmful to our environment? That includes sources of drinking water and the pipes and pumps needed to supply water to our customers. Once the ice and snow melts, the salt doesn’t go away. It seeps into the ground and wells, and travels with stormwater into streams, wells and drinking water reservoirs. It also corrodes pipes.

Please remember to be saltwise! A 12-ounce coffee mug full of salt is enough to treat a 20-foot driveway or 10 sidewalk squares. Please visit <http://wsscwater.com/saltwise> to learn more.

## WSSC Water Maintains AAA Bond Rating on \$299M Bond Sale

On February 1st, [WSSC Water received AAA bond ratings](#) from all three financial rating agencies – Fitch Ratings, Standard & Poor’s Global (S&P) and Moody’s Investor Service on an upcoming February 8 sale of \$299.3 million in consolidated public improvement general obligation (GO) bonds. The bond includes \$30 million in green bonds. This marks the 23<sup>rd</sup> consecutive year that WSSC Water has achieved this premier rating.

Proceeds from the general obligation bonds will fund key capital projects, including:

- \$25.2 million for the Anacostia Maintenance Depot Reconfiguration;
- \$24.9 million for Prince George’s County South Potomac Supply Improvement, Phase 2;
- \$22.1 million for the Water Reconstruction Program; and
- \$13.5 million Water Storage Facility Rehabilitation Program.

Proceeds from the sale of \$30 million in green bonds will fund the following upgrades:

- Potomac Water Filtration Plant: \$20 million
- Large-diameter water distribution system: \$10 million

To learn more about WSSC Water’s financial information, visit [wsscwater.com/fin](http://wsscwater.com/fin). For more information on the utility’s green bonds, visit [wsscwater.com/greenbonds](http://wsscwater.com/greenbonds).

## Streamlined Payment Plans Help Customers

WSSC Water has a new service for customers with past-due bills. In partnership with Promise, residential and business customers who owe \$50 or more on their bill can establish affordable, flexible, interest-free payment plans. By setting up a payment plan for past-due water and sewer bills and staying current with the plan, customers avoid late fees and possible water service turnoffs. To learn more, visit the bilingual Promise Pay portal at [wsscwater.promise-pay.com](http://wsscwater.promise-pay.com).

## WSSC Water Commissioners' Engineering Scholarship

Applications are now available for the 2024 Commissioners’ Engineering Scholarship. The deadline to apply is **Thursday, February 15, 2024**.

- The scholarship, which provides \$2,000 per year, supports WSSC Water’s ongoing efforts to attract aspiring engineers to careers in the water industry.
- The scholarship is open to undergraduate or graduate students with permanent residency in Montgomery or Prince George’s counties and are enrolled in a full-time college or university engineering program. Graduating high school seniors accepted into a college engineering program are also eligible.

- Applicants must include an introductory video and essay, two reference letters, an official transcript and proof of residency in WSSC Water's service district.

You may access and submit your application online [here](#), or via US mail. Applications submitted via mail must be postmarked by February 15, 2024, and addressed to: Julianne Montes de Oca, Corporate Secretary, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, 14501 Sweitzer Lane, Laurel, MD 20707.

Please visit [wsscwater.com/scholarship](http://wsscwater.com/scholarship) to get complete details and application requirements.

## Customer Notification System (CNS)

In our continuing effort to provide excellent customer service, WSSC Water offers a Customer Notification System (CNS) to alert you about our work in your area that may affect your service or daily routine.

Once you sign up, you will receive email or text alerts about water main breaks, sanitary sewer overflows, road or lane closures caused by WSSC Water work, boil water advisories and occasionally other important messages from us.

Sign up [here](#) for CNS and never be in the dark about water main repairs and water emergencies in your neighborhood.

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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 Financial 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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301-648-6953

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

**Stephen Billingsley**

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240-444-5803

*Southern Montgomery County (areas south of Randolph Road)*

**Brandon Stewart**

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301-642-1712

*Northern Montgomery County (areas north of Randolph Road)*

**Phil Callahan**

[Phil.Callahan@wsscwater.com](mailto:Phil.Callahan@wsscwater.com)

240-204-2123

Find your Customer Advocate [here](#).

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# Calendar

- March 18, 2024 – Crossover
  - April 1, 2024 – Budget bill to be passed by both Chambers
  - April 8, 2024 – 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

**Monica Marquina** – Government Affairs Director

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**Terry Walker-Morris** – Administrative Professional

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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)