



News & Notes

A publication of the MWRA Advisory Board
January 2005

2005-2006 Legislative Session Underway

The 184th General Court convened on January 5, 2005. A total of 17 new Legislators were inaugurated, 4 in the Senate and 13 in the House. Many of the new Legislators will join the MWRA caucus, depending on whether their district includes any MWRA service communities.

The Advisory Board's legislative priorities include expanding debt service assistance, providing assistance to municipalities and homeowners for lead service line replacement, and securing funds to help reduce infiltration and inflow into local collection systems. To learn more about the Advisory Board's legislative agenda, please visit our website (see below).

Advisory Board Chair Added to Water Supply Protection Board of Trustees

Last month, Governor Mitt Romney signed into law a bill that adds the Chair of the MWRA Advisory Board to the group charged with overseeing the newly created Water Supply Protection Trust.

The Trust, established in the Fiscal Year 2005 (FY05) budget, accomplished the Advisory Board's goal of moving the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) Division of Water Supply Protection funding out of the General Fund.

The Trust will be overseen by a five-member Board that consists of the Chair of the MWRA Advisory Board, the Secretary of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (or her appointee), the Executive Director of the MWRA, one person selected by the North Worcester County Quabbin Anglers and the Quabbin Fishermen's Association, and the President of the Swift River Valley Historical Society (or her appointee).

Annual CIP Review Underway

Advisory Board staff has begun its review of the MWRA's Proposed Fiscal Year 2006 Capital Improvement Program and Budget (CIP). In its enabling language, the Advisory Board is empowered to review and comment on the CIP. The proposed CIP projects total spending of \$1.1 billion for fiscal years 2004-2008, \$530 million for fiscal years 2009-2013, and a net of \$16 million in fiscal years 2014-2015, (The estimates include contingency allowances and inflation adjustments.) Copies of the fiscal year 2006 CIP will be mailed to Advisory Board members this month. Staff expects to complete its review in February/March and will have additional information at that time. In the meantime, please contact Advisory Board staff.

New Submetering Law Effective March 16, 2005

As of March 16, 2005, landlords can charge tenants for their water usage due to a new law allowing the installation of submetering devices in rental units. Landlords are responsible for installation of all submeters at their own expense and are also responsible to the water company for a building's water-usage bills even if the building is submetered. The following are some highlights of the new law that local officials should be aware of.:

- ◆ Submeters must be installed by a licensed plumber
- ◆ Landlords must guarantee that water conserving fixtures are installed throughout all submetered units
- ◆ Landlords must ensure a building's total water usage, measured by its primary meter, equals the combined usage measured by each submeter.
- ◆ A rental unit is only eligible for submetering upon commencement of a new tenancy. Existing tenants are grandfathered under the law.
- ◆ Landlords may not pass on the costs of submetering, including administrative and billing costs, to tenants.
- ◆ Water companies' liabilities and obligations remain unaffected by the new law
- ◆ Landlords must maintain the water supply system for each dwelling.
- ◆ Public Housing tenants are exempt from the water submetering law.

Clean Water Funding Cut

On December 8, 2004, President Bush signed an omnibus spending bill, which includes \$1.1 billion for the Clean Water State Revolving fund, down \$250 million from Fiscal Year 2004. Massachusetts could lose up to \$10 million in clean-water money next year as a result of the cuts, which could affect its ability to properly maintain its water and sewer systems.

Upcoming Meetings

January 14--	Executive Committee Meeting	8:30 am at Advisory Board Office
January 20--	Advisory Board Meeting	11:30 am in Canton
February 9--	MWRA Board of Directors Meeting	10:30 am in Charlestown
February 18--	Executive Committee Meeting	8:30 am at Advisory Board Office
February 24--	Advisory Board Meeting	11:30 am in Lexington

If you have any questions regarding topics raised in this newsletter or any other MWRA issue, please contact:

Andrea Briggs, Government/Media Coordinator • Phone: 617-742-7561 • Fax: 617-742-4614 • Email: andrea.briggs@mwra.state.ma.us

Web Site: <http://www.mwraadvisoryboard.com>