



# NEWS & NOTES

A PUBLICATION OF THE MWRA ADVISORY BOARD  
OCTOBER 2009

## AB URGES A LEVEL RATE REVENUE REQUIREMENT FOR FY11

In a letter sent to MWRA Chairman Ian Bowles and Executive Director Fred Laskey, MWRA Advisory Board Chairwoman Katherine Dunphy urged the Authority to keep the rate revenue requirement for communities level funded for FY11. This approach, endorsed by the Advisory Board's Executive Committee on October 9, would result in a 0% wholesale rate increase for many communities. The bleak economic situation facing the Commonwealth is spurring further reductions in the state budget. Local aid cuts are likely to occur in order to close the growing budget gap. Potential reductions in local aid in FY10 and FY11 will put additional pressure on cities and towns, which have already cut staff and services to balance their budgets. "If ever there was a year to allow cities, towns, and especially ratepayers to catch their breath, it is FY11," said Chairwoman Dunphy. The Advisory Board is urging Authority staff to make use of various "tools" provided in the Advisory Board's review of the Proposed FY10 budgets, which include many potential areas of reductions. Advisory Board staff will work with Authority staff to achieve this ambitious, but necessary goal.

## MWRA AIDING IN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN COMMUNITIES

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has required all water suppliers to update emergency plans for significant new emergency scenarios and to submit a completed checklist by December 31, 2009. MWRA is developing a template to help communities. The template will include DEP's revised notification strategies, required DEP forms, outline response plans to specific new scenarios and other technical information to comply with DEP requirements. Communities will be able to input their system information or append the MWRA documents to existing local emergency plans. The template is expected to be ready in November. MWRA staff will be in touch with Water Department staff in communities to coordinate this effort.

## GOVERNOR CUTS DSA, CLINTON MONEY

Governor Patrick announced sweeping mid-year 9C cuts to the state budget in the face of a \$600 million deficit four months into FY10. This is the fourth time over the past year the Governor has made emergency cuts to the state budget. The \$500,000 from the Commonwealth Sewer Rate Relief Fund, also known as Debt Service Assistance (DSA), was completely eliminated. Also eliminated is the \$500,000 reimbursement for the Clinton Wastewater Treatment Plant. These cuts follow the loss of chemical reimbursements totaling more than \$900,000 at the start of the fiscal year. The Governor indicated that 2,000 state jobs are also in jeopardy; some positions depend on union concessions, others will be eliminated. The Governor is seeking expanded 9C authority from the legislature to make cuts to non-executive branch agencies, which could include local aid, as well as cutting \$277 million across executive branch agencies.

## AB TESTIFIES FOR NEW BOTTLE BILL

Executive Director Joseph Favaloro testified in support of H.3125: *An Act to Expand the Bottle Bill* at a legislative hearing this month. This bill would expand the existing Bottle Bill to include a 5-cent deposit on bottled water containers. Unreturned deposit receipts would be placed in a dedicated fund available to municipalities, water districts and the MWRA to be used for water and sewer infrastructure repairs and projects. Funding for local water and sewer infrastructure projects has been slashed in recent years. When the Bottle Bill was written 27 years ago, bottled water was not on the radar. Today, Americans spend billions of dollars a year on it. In addition to its environmental impact, reduced usage of public water causes challenges in communities. The Advisory Board testified that the state should seize the opportunity to update the Bottle Bill in order to re-invest in the public water and sewer infrastructure. This updated bottle bill would create a win-win situation for communities, for ratepayers, and for the environment. The bill was supported by the Metro Mayors Coalition; in addition 100 communities have signed on in support of an expanded Bottle Bill in some format.

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

**NOVEMBER 13:** EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE / 8:30 AM – BOSTON  
**NOVEMBER 18:** MWRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS / 1 PM - CHARLESTOWN  
**NOVEMBER 19:** MWRA ADVISORY BOARD / 11:30 AM – LEXINGTON

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