



NEWS & NOTES

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PARTNERING IS A TWO-WAY STREET

EDITORIAL BY AB EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
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Webster's Dictionary defines "partners" as "one that is united or associated with another or others in an activity or a sphere of common interest."

MWRA and its ratepayers have taken this word seriously. Billions of dollars have been spent for the harbor, combined sewer overflows, water treatment and redundancy. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, well, that's a different story!

Here are examples of the Commonwealth's idea of being a partner:

Example 1: If a community or authority needs funds for water and sewer funding, there is only one game in town; it is called the SRF (State Revolving Fund) and is administered by the Water Pollution Abatement Trust (WPAT). There are hundreds of projects worth over \$1.865 billion in the FY12 Draft Intended Use Plans for Drinking Water and Safe Drinking Water Act.

The last borrowing occurred in FY11; the next borrowing has been postponed to sometime in FY13. Isn't that WPAT's principal responsibility? Due to their inaction and the unavailability of promised funds, MWRA has to borrow additional funds at nearly double the rate of the SRF (2% vs. 3.91%) and that comes out of ratepayer's pockets.

Example 2: Ratepayers pay nearly \$26 million per year in order to reimburse the Commonwealth for watershed protection activities.

About two years ago, the Commonwealth placed a moratorium on forestry activities and engaged "experts" to review forestry operations and provide a report. You guessed it, two years later there is still no report. Ratepayers have had to pony up nearly \$1 million in

additional funds to make up for the loss of forestry revenues and even more importantly, forestry operations, which are a critical element to watershed protection, have ground to a halt.

Example 3: MWRA communities have reduced water use from over 300 MGD to 195 MGD over the past 20 years. We have water to sell and communities, especially in stressed basins, need our water. The town of Reading is a community in the stressed Ipswich River Basin and it took nearly 5 years to navigate the state's regulatory process. Four years ago, the MWRA and the MWRA Advisory Board engaged the Commonwealth to work with us to develop a regulatory process for communities that was more navigable. You guessed it, four years later no changes have been made to the regulatory process. However, the Commonwealth still wants the MWRA and its ratepayers to spend \$3 million to build a dedicated pipeline to the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and the Wildlife McLaughlin Fish Hatchery in order to provide a continuous supply of cold water to the hatchery in order to reduce the stress on the fish. "What about the stressed ratepayers?"

I could go on about Debt Service Assistance, the Clinton Wastewater Treatment Plant or even the Non Water Supply Related Dam repairs but you get the picture.

MWRA Advisory Board to the Commonwealth...
We Need You To Do Your Part!

UPCOMING MEETINGS

April 3rd	MWRA Public Hearing on CEB at 6:30 pm at Boston City Hall
April 11th	MWRA Board of Directors Mtg. in Charlestown
April 13th	AB Executive Committee Mtg. in Charlestown
April 19th	MWRA Full Advisory Board Mtg. in Canton