



News & Notes

A Publication of the
MWRA Advisory Board

June 2018

Highlighting the Need for Resiliency in Communities

Climate Change Workshop



On June 15, Advisory Board members, elected officials, advocacy groups, and other concerned citizens were in attendance at Boston College for one of the largest Advisory Board events ever. Like other MuniWorks workshops on stormwater and metropolitan water redundancy, this climate change forum was organized to share information with communities, provide resources, and

help get the ball rolling. An all-star lineup of speakers and panelists from many agencies and levels of government served to do just that. An undeniable highlight of the workshop was the keynote address of Gina McCarthy, Director of the Center for Climate, Health, and the Global Environment at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and EPA administrator under President Obama. She brought guests to their feet, as she identified climate change as an issue we can tackle if we move to clean energy sources, and perhaps more significantly, if we learn to work together.



An afternoon panel outlined what resources are available to communities as they begin to address climate change. Topics included where to get started, building code and energy, zoning and land use, funding opportunities, and building support within communities. Resources and examples discussed by our panelists, as well as the morning presentations, are available on our [website](#). Check out our [video summary](#) of the event linked below. Many thanks to Boston College for hosting us, as well as everyone who attended this great event.

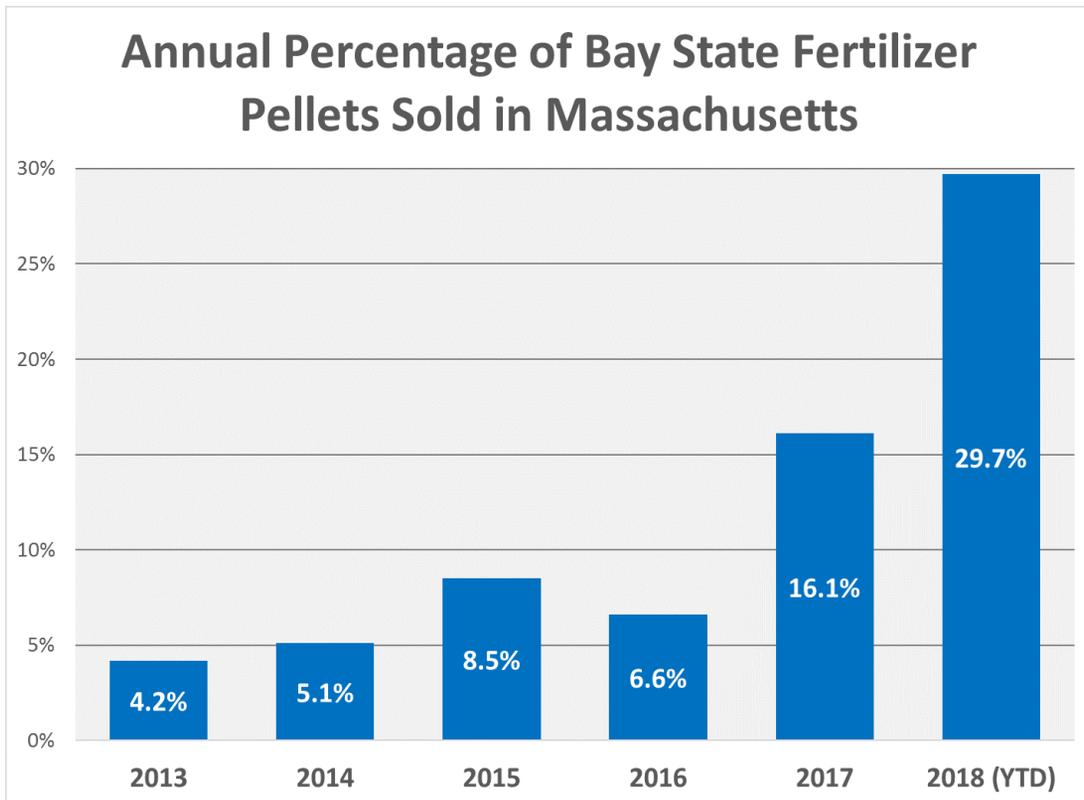
Increasing Pellet Distribution in State

Advisory Board Makes a Positive Difference

The Advisory Board's long-term focus on sustainable MWRA operations had a direct impact on state regulations, which in return has benefited MWRA rate payers, the environment, and the Massachusetts economy.

Beginning in May 2014, the Advisory Board has advocated for changes to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regulation of biosolids, specifically the concentration of molybdenum in the pellets produced at the Authority's Fore River Pelletization Plant. The aim of the DEP regulation is to prevent high concentrations of molybdenum from affecting livestock populations. The Advisory Board, however, took issue with the excessive discrepancy between the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) land use limits of 75 mg/kg and the DEP limits of 10/25 mg (10 mg for grazing land 25 mg for all other uses). The unfounded Massachusetts restrictions forced an annual average of 94% of Bay State Fertilizer pellet sales to be out of state at a cost to the environment and the state economy. Please visit the [FY15](#) and [FY16](#) Comments and Recommendations to see the full comparisons between the EPA regulations and DEP restrictions.

Because of the Advisory Board's consistent advocacy for establishing a science-based, defensible molybdenum limit, DEP reevaluated its Molybdenum standards in biosolids. The new DEP limits match those held by New York at 40 mg/kg for land use application. This milestone achievement has allowed for an expansive shift in pellet sales within Massachusetts. Since the policy changes went into effect in September 2016, in-state pellet sales have dramatically increased. In 2017, in-state sales made up 16.1% of pellet sales compared to the 6.6% in-state sales of 2016. To date, 2018 in-state sales make up 29.7% overall pellet sales. The figure below shows these economic successes of 2017 and 2018 in comparison to the previous years under the more restrictive biosolids policy.



The Advisory Board’s commitment to common sense policy continues to pay off. In addition to boosting the local economy, the continued decrease in out-of-state sales will have a positive environmental impact from reduced carbon emissions.

There are still potential red flags to the MWRA green, in-state, beneficial reuse approach. The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) has concerns of phosphorus leaching from pellets (MWRA has science to state otherwise). There is also a push from some environmentalists to landfill all pellets. The Advisory Board will continue to fight for in-state beneficial reuse of pellets and will not stop fighting until the percentage of in-state sales approaches 100%.

MWRA Board of Directors Ratifies Advisory Board Recommendations

Lowest Rate Increase in Six Years



The MWRA Board of Directors agreed with the Advisory Board's recommendations to reduce the MWRA's rate revenue requirement from 3.91% to 3.07%, the smallest increase in six years. Their vote also brought the FY19-23 capital spending cap under the \$1 billion

mark in response to the Advisory Board's challenge.

The MWRA Retirement Board voted to adopt the Advisory Board's and MWRA staff's recommendations to extend the funding schedule for the MWRA's pension from 2024 to 2028, providing some additional sustainability and predictability to these expenses. In fact, in FY19-24 - the most challenging years rates-wise - this extended pension schedule saves ratepayers \$12.8 million.

The Advisory Board thanks MWRA staff for working with us to begin meeting the next challenge set by the Advisory Board: to bring rate increases down below 3.5% in FY19-23, and to set rate increases at flat 2.4% increases beginning in FY24: "2.4 by '24."

The "Silver Tsunami" Continues

Retirements at the MWRA

When the MWRA was created in 1984, much of the staff came over from MDC or was hired as the Authority bulked up to begin Deer Island projects. Nearly 35 years later and after distinguished

PRCAL
5/20/18

STAFF SUMMARY

TO: Board of Directors
 FROM: Frederick A. Laskay, Executive Director *F.A. Laskay*
 DATE: May 30, 2018
 SUBJECT: Update on Retirements

COMMITTEE: Personnel and Compensation INFORMATION
 VOTE

Karen Gay-Valente, Director of Human Resources *Karen Gay-Valente*
 Andrea Murphy, Employment Manager *Andrea Murphy*
 Preparer/Title Michele S. Giller, Director Administration *M. S. Giller*

MWRA continues to see an increase in the number of employees leaving the Agency due to retirement. The Board has requested an overview of the staff retirements over the past year and information on how the MWRA has handled those retirements. This staff summary provides that information.

RECOMMENDATION:
 For information only.

DISCUSSION:
 MWRA continues to see an increase in staff turnover, mostly due to a higher number of employees reaching an age with enough years of service to retire. The steady increase in retirements started in FY13. In FY12, 23 employees left the agency due to retirement. By FY15 that number had almost doubled, with 40 employees retiring that year.

At the last Board meeting, three additional senior level staff announced their retirements: John Vetere, Deputy Chief Operating Officer; Karen Gay-Valente, Director of Human Resources, and Mike Delaney, Director of Laboratory Services. John was honored with a roast by Joe Favaloro at his retirement party. [Click here](#) to see pictures and a presentation the Advisory Board put together for Mr. Vetere.

careers, these employees are retiring at an increasing rate. In fact, from May 2017 to April 2018, 56 MWRA employees retired, including six senior level managers. [Click here](#) to see the staff summary. Included in that list was Mike Hornbrook, COO, who was replaced by Dave Coppes.



With all the retirements, MWRA continues to accomplish its mission. They should be commended for their succession planning, deep bench, and commitment to filling positions with minimal operational impact. Be it Dave

Coppes (for Mike Hornbrook), Andrea Murphy (for Karen Gay-Valente), Steve Rhodes (for Mike Delaney), or a reconfiguration of water and sewer operations (Mark Johnson on the water side, Steve Cullen on the sewer side), the Authority continues to be led by seasoned pros, promoted from within. Congratulations and good luck to all MWRA retirees.

Andrew Pappastergion Reelected for 7th Term

Representing Communities on the BOD



At the June Advisory Board meeting, with over 150 individuals in attendance and including 34 voting members, Andrew Pappastergion was unanimously reelected to serve from July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2021, as an Advisory Board representative to the MWRA Board of Directors. Andrew said, "Over the past 21 years, it has been my goal to provide the best representation possible for the 60 communities that are in the MWRA. While the issues are at times complex, the record will show that your three appointees to the Board work well as a team and strive to be effective in carrying the vote of the Board. In addition, it is important to note that the three Advisory Board members are currently the longest serving Directors and are able to provide a level of continuity to an ever

changing Board. I will strive to maintain and strengthen our voice at the Board of Directors.” Advisory Board staff are grateful to Andrew for his service and as always look forward to working with him on the issues at hand.

Please [click here](#) to view the May 30th Board of Directors summary.

Upcoming Events

For [July](#) and [August](#)

July 4 | Independence Day (office closed)

July 18 | 10:00 AM, [MWRA Board of Directors Meeting](#) in MWRA Board Room

August 23 | Tentative Date for Advisory Board Field Trip (details to follow)



*Wishing all a safe
and happy 4th of
July!*

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