

MWRA AB Editorial Response – 12/11/18

The MWRA Advisory Board is glad that the Globe acknowledges in its Editorial “Boston Harbor is clean but could face new threats to marine life: plastics and drugs” that the MWRA has successfully fulfilled its mission to clean up Boston Harbor.

Clearly, the cleanup is an environmental and economic success story which has benefitted all of Massachusetts. Where the Globe has it backwards is when it states “The 43 cities and towns of the MWRA district owe the agency a debt.” It is the MWRA and all of Massachusetts who owe the 43 communities a huge “high five.”

That \$4.7 billion came, and continues to come, from ratepayers in these communities. It didn’t come from the Commonwealth, and absolutely did not come from the Federal Government.

The Globe now believes that no good work should go unpunished: “MWRA should turn and focus on new contaminants...It is clear that a shift in focus would be consistent with the agency’s mission.” Really?!?

Ratepayers have expended over \$74 million in monitoring since 1992. The MWRA has spent over 2,300 survey days collecting and analyzing nutrients in seawater, phytoplankton, zooplankton, as well as thousands of measurements per year for other parameters like chlorophyll and dissolved oxygen.

As the Globe states, this monitoring has found no evidence that MWRA’s outfall discharge causes degradation in Mass. Bay. The MWRA has done its job.

Emerging threats to the marine environment such as pharmaceuticals and plastics should be evaluated, but the MWRA is not the only stakeholder and this should not be funded on our ratepayers’ dime. It is past time for others to step up to the plate.

For instance, the Advisory Board has long advocated for State resources to adequately fund the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). With the State coffers overflowing, it is time for the State as well as other stakeholders to begin to fulfill their responsibilities – the MWRA and its ratepayers have absolutely fulfilled ours.

Joseph Favaloro is the Executive Director of the MWRA Advisory Board, which was created in the same statute that created the MWRA. Our role is to represent the interests of the MWRA’s member communities. For more information, go to www.mwraadvisoryboard.com.