



# News and Notes

A Publication of the  
Advisory Board for MWRA Communities

July 2016

## Ratepayers Pay for Projects Once!!

An Editorial

by AB Executive Director Joe Favaloro

The battle between the MWRA and NSTAR/Eversource (Harbor Electric Energy Company) took another turn earlier this month.

A suit was filed by US Attorney Carmen Ortiz regarding the Cross Harbor Cable. The suit asks for Eversource (HEEC) and the MWRA to comply with the 1989 federal permit to remove the cable and pay "appropriate civil penalties."

A message for the Federal Court, MassPort and Army Corp: **WE ALREADY COMPLIED AND WILL NOT PAY AGAIN.**

Some facts that the US Attorney seems to ignore:

For the past 25 years, MWRA as the sole customer of HEEC has made annual payments to them, not only for capacity and maintenance, but for the capital cost of the cross-harbor electrical cable totaling \$39.4 million and \$104 million with interest added in.

The cable was designed, constructed, and maintained by HEEC. Low and

behold, HEEC's cross-harbor cable fails to comply with the Army Corp of Engineers specifications because it wasn't laid deep enough.

We fully appreciate MassPort's desire to deepen the harbor by carving a channel to accommodate larger ships. This could be an economic boon to the region. Just as the Boston Harbor Cleanup has generated over \$87 million a year in state and local taxes and over a \$100 million per year in additional local buying power (as reported in our full [study on investment in water and wastewater infrastructure and economic development](#)).

But let me reiterate: we did nothing wrong. It is not our responsibility to pay twice for HEEC's mistakes and/or disregard for the Army Corps permit.

Mr. Laskey in his response to the Court filings emphatically stated "The Massachusetts Water Resource Authority remains steadfast that neither the Authority nor its ratepayers should bear the burden for NSTAR's incorrect installation of the Boston Harbor Electric Cable, and we look forward to the timely resolution of the issue."

Our ratepayers have born the \$6 billion in costs for all the MWRA projects from the clean-up of the Harbor, to a fishable and swimmable Charles River, to the best drinking water in the country.

But, as I opened with, ratepayers pay for projects once. This is a battle we will fight from the Moakley Federal Court House in South Boston all the way to the Supreme Court in Washington if need be.

Some fights you do not back away from. This is one of them.

## Reserve Your Space

### Have You Signed Up for the AB Field Trip?

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It's that time of year!! The MWRA Advisory Board cordially invites you to attend our Annual Field Trip on Thursday August 18, 2016. We will be exploring MWRA Wastewater Facilities. Included in this year's Field Trip are:

- Chelsea Creek Headworks (Recently awarded major rehabilitation contract)
- Nut Island Pump Station (Site of a major fire)

- Ride on the Fore River Railroad

Luncheon will occur at the adjacent Nut Island Park (barbeque as usual). After lunch, we will be dedicating a park bench in honor of Mary Ann McCellan (made possible by the generous contributions of her friends, colleagues and co-workers).

### Itinerary (Subject to Revision)

8:45 – Bus departs from the Weston Reservoir (118 Newton Street, parking available)

9:30 – Bus departs the MWRA Chelsea Facility (2 Griffin Way, parking available)

9:45 – Buses arrive at Chelsea Creek Headworks to tour facility with MWRA staff

10:30 – Buses depart Chelsea Creek Headworks for Nut Island Pump Station

11:15 – Tour of Nut Island Pump Station

11:45 – Barbeque Luncheon

12:30 – Dedication of Memorial Bench in Mary Ann McCellan's name

1:15 – Board buses to Fore River Railroad

(Ride the Fore River Railroad)

1:45 – Buses depart for Weston and Chelsea

### RSVP

If you would like to join us, please respond to [MWRA.AB@MWRAAdvisoryBoard.com](mailto:MWRA.AB@MWRAAdvisoryBoard.com), or by phone at 617-788-2050, no later than Friday, August 12th to secure your spot so that we can finalize the schedule and itinerary and provide a count for the food. **Please note if you wish to depart from Weston or Chelsea.**

Please extend invitations to your town/city officials and state legislators as

well.

## Annual Water & Sewer Rate Survey

### We Need Your Help!

The 2016 Annual Water and Sewer Retail Rate Survey has been sent out and we look forward to receiving your responses from your communities!

Since 1988, the Water and Sewer Retail Rate Survey has provided a comparative perspective on local and national water and sewer rates. Your continued feedback allows the Advisory Board to share your community's rate information with a broad group of interested parties who contact our office or visit our website to obtain this report.

Beginning in 2014, the Advisory Board began to develop an information base of how communities are handling, or are planning to handle, the operating and capital costs associated with stormwater management. With the general permits for stormwater discharges to be in place effective on July 1, 2017, we anticipate this information to have an even greater benefit to our member communities.

If you have any questions, please contact James Guidod by phone at 617-788-2055, or by e-mail at: [James.Guidod@MWRAAdvisoryBoard.com](mailto:James.Guidod@MWRAAdvisoryBoard.com). If you are interested in learning more about the Advisory Board, please visit our website at <http://www.mwraadvisoryboard.com>.

## Upcoming Events

August 18	<b>Advisory Board Field Trip</b> Scroll up for details
September 9	<b>AB Executive Committee</b> 8:30 am
September 14	<b>MWRA Board of Directors</b> Charlestown - 10:00 am
September 15	<b>AB Meeting in Lexington</b> 11:30am

[Visit Our Website](#)

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