



# NEWS RELEASE



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**CONTACT:** Ria Convery, MWRA: 617-839-3944 or [ria.convery@mwra.com](mailto:ria.convery@mwra.com)

**MWRA and MWRA ADVISORY BOARD APPROVE \$100 MILLION IN RATE RELIEF**  
***Measures aimed to help communities and ratepayers through financial uncertainties***

In light of the uncertain economic climate caused by the COVID-19 virus, the MWRA Board of Directors and the MWRA Advisory Board have voted to reduce the planned FY2021 combined water and sewer increases to member communities by \$29 million. The Board also approved a recommendation by the MWRA Advisory Board to potentially defer over \$71 million in community loan payments.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has created financial uncertainties for local water and sewer utilities, which continue to work to provide residents these essential services,” **said MWRA Board Chair and Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Kathleen Theoharides.** “This comprehensive strategy will provide financial relief and flexibility to water and sewer utilities in MWRA member communities, while protecting ratepayers from additional economic pressure during this challenging time.”

MWRA proposed a 3.6% increase in February, but with reductions to its operating budget and capital financing, the rate increase, which goes into effect July 1, 2020, was lowered to 1.0%. These cuts will not result in any loss of service.

Also, MWRA received \$891,535 from the Commonwealth yesterday from the Department of Revenue’s Debt Service Assistance Program. The program is intended to provide relief to communities paying off sewer projects, including the cleanup of Boston Harbor. This year, the funding will be used to reduce each communities’ June 2020 assessment downward by their share of the program funding.

In addition to the rates, the Board approved a recommendation from the MWRA Advisory Board to allow communities to defer payments on any Local Water Pipeline and Infiltration/Inflow loans with repayments due to MWRA in FY2020, FY2021 and FY2022.

“We have worked hard to ensure that this will not impact our long-term rates management strategy. It is our goal that member communities can continue to expect affordable and predictable rate increases in the future,” **said Lou Taverna, Chair of the MWRA Advisory Board.**

Restructuring these loans will allow for cash flow relief to communities by reducing the principal payments due during the fiscal year. It will be up to the individual communities to decide whether or not to take advantage of this program.

“We hope that these measures help to ease the financial burden on our member communities and our ratepayers during these challenging and uncertain times,” **said Fred Laskey, MWRA’s Executive Director.**

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