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Water Utility Council of the
PA-Section, American Water
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GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

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*PA- Section, American Water Works Association
National Association of Water Companies
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Senate Votes to Release \$1 Billion in Withheld Payments to Schools, Critical Funding for Social Service Agencies

In passing an \$11.2 billion temporary state funding plan, the state Senate voted to send tax dollars being collected by the state back to communities, including \$1 billion in missed payments to schools and hundreds of millions of dollars to social services agencies.

The move is the latest effort by Senate Republicans to help schools, counties, municipalities, agencies and contractors that saw their state payments end on July 1 after Governor Wolf vetoed House Bill 1192 on June 30 - almost immediately after its passage by the General Assembly.

"I am pleased that today, we have advanced legislation to provide our schools and vital services with needed funding," said Senate President Pro Tempore Joe Scarnati (R-25). "This stop-gap budget would provide financial stability for our Commonwealth while a final budget agreement continues to be negotiated. As members of the

General Assembly, it is our job to ensure that taxpayers' money is not being held hostage during the current budget impasse."

"Tax dollars continue to flow to Harrisburg. The money is being collected from people's paychecks and through the state sales tax. Voting to provide this funding is the right thing to do," said Senate Majority Leader Jake Corman (R-34). "Frustration with the budget negotiations continues to mount - both inside and outside the Capitol building. Understandably so. Adopting stop-gap funding is our only option to help fund our schools and human services organizations, who are being hit hard by the loss of state funds."

"We are and will continue to work with the Governor to come to an agreement on a final appropriations bill, but the Governor's current approach and the levels of spending and taxes he is requesting do not allow for that accommodation at this time," Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Pat Browne (R-16) said. "In the meantime, however, this short-term budget is something we can and must do to meet the obligations we have to provide necessary and critical funding to school districts, non-profits and state agencies, while simultaneously continuing those conversations."

"These are important local services that affect our most vulnerable citizens: seniors, school children, at-risk youth, women in dangerous domestic situations," said Senate Majority Whip John Gordner (R-27). "It's past time to get funding to these critical programs."

The stop-gap funding measure now goes to the House for consideration next week.

Most of the social service money will go to restore missed payments to county child welfare agencies. Other agencies that will benefit include domestic violence organizations, rape crisis centers, homeless assistance groups, human services development funds and special pharmaceutical services.

The three-bill package provides \$11.2 billion in state allocations. That represents one-third (four months) of the state funding as authorized by HB 1192 with limited exceptions. The stop-gap budget also allocates the federal money Pennsylvania administers for schools and local governments.

Source: Senate Republican Communications, 9/18/2015

Costa Condemns Republican Stopgap Budget

On September 18, 2015, Senate Democratic Leader Jay Costa (D-Allegheny) condemned the proposed four-month \$11.22 billion Republican stopgap budget as a "political ploy" designed to thwart negotiations on a comprehensive budget agreement.

"The Senate Republican stopgap budget plan is a political ploy that drags down efforts to construct a long-term, comprehensive budget agreement that includes real dollars for education, human services, deficit reduction and property tax cuts," Costa said. "Stopgap budgets are only used when you are not up to the task of negotiating a full budget.

"We keep wasting time on budget tricks and veto-override maneuvers instead of bargaining sessions that would ultimately result in a comprehensive spending plan."

The stopgap budget passed the Senate today on a partisan, party-line vote and now heads to the state House of Representatives for consideration. Gov. Tom Wolf has promised to veto it.

The Republican stopgap is a slimmed down version of the Republican budget that was vetoed by the governor June 30.

Costa said the Republican plan does not include a reasonable Marcellus Shale extraction tax or property tax relief, which are supported by a strong majority of Pennsylvanians and remain among Senate Democratic priorities.

"The plan is essentially one-third of what was before the Senate earlier this year," Costa said. "That was a bad budget that was balanced on tricks and faulty revenues that would keep Pennsylvania treading water.

Costa said that negotiators can do better but are hobbled by Republican intransigence. He said that the governor has offered significant compromises on two issues that Republicans say must meet their demands – pensions and liquor privatization – before any consideration of the General Fund budget will be considered.

"It is incredibly frustrating to negotiate when Republicans apparently see no value in agreeing to a long-term plan that includes real investments in education, human services, job creation, property tax relief and a shale extraction tax while addressing the \$1.3 billion deficit," Costa said. "The Republican tactics and budget ploys raise real questions about whether they are interested in any comprehensive agreement."

Pennsylvania does not have an approved General Fund spending plan. The budget was supposed to be approved by June 30.

Source: Senator Costa Press Release, 9/18/2015

DCNR: Notice of an Interim Final Policy for the Imposition of Fees for PNDI

Receipts Generated through the PA Conservation Explorer

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is announcing an interim final Policy for the Imposition of Fees for Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) Receipts Generated Through the Pennsylvania Conservation Explorer. The department will impose a fee of \$40 on users who receive PNDI Receipts generated through the new Pennsylvania Conservation Explorer, a conservation planning and environmental review tool, and will use those fees to support the Pennsylvania Conservation Explorer. Questions regarding the policy should be directed to DCNR Bureau of Forestry's Natural Heritage Section at RA-HeritageReview@pa.gov.

Source: PA Bulletin, [9/19/2015](#)

Williamsport Joins Partnership for Safe Water's New Distribution Optimization Program

Williamsport Municipal Water Authority in Lycoming County recently became a member of a new program operated by the Partnership for Safe Water (PFSW). The Distribution Optimization Program is specifically focused on preserving distribution system integrity to include water quality preservation, hydraulic reliability and physical security.

Surface water, groundwater, and consecutive water systems are eligible to enroll in the voluntary program that consists of four phases including a commitment to the program, annual data collection and submittal, a self assessment phase, and a final phase of Excellence in Distribution System Operation.

Williamsport's water system provides drinking water service to approximately 51,000 people.

For more information, email Kevin Anderson at keanderson@pa.gov Information is also available on DEP's website (keyword: "filtration").

Source: DEP News, 9/17/2015

DEP Secretary Quigley Discusses Climate Change with the Pa. Association of Floodplain Managers

The Pennsylvania Association of Floodplain Managers held its annual fall meeting in Harrisburg on Sept. 16. DEP Secretary Quigley delivered the keynote address.

"Floodplain managers will be on the front lines of climate disruption," he said before a group of more than 60 flood and stormwater professionals. "Science is showing us that not only are the changes and disruptions to our state's climate significant, but they are occurring alarmingly fast."

Quigley explained that, according to the Climate Impacts Assessment Update published by the Pennsylvania State University, Philadelphia can expect to have a climate similar to present-day Richmond, Virginia by 2050. He also noted that with that warming has come disruption in the water cycle, and as such a higher flood potential.

Quigley discussed the need for smart updates to Pennsylvania's water plan, as well as DEP's partnership with DCNR to commit to riparian buffers, to combat the impacts of climate change. "We have to partner and collaborate to address the implications of climate change, the largest uncontrolled chemistry experiment in history," he said.

To read the Climate Impacts Assessment, click [here](#).

Source: DEP News, 9/17/2015

DEP Holds the First of 14 Listening Sessions on the Federal Clean Power Plan

DEP Secretary John Quigley, Policy Director Patrick McDonnell, and Deputy Secretary Ken Reisinger led the first of an unprecedented 14 listening sessions on Pennsylvania's compliance with the EPA's Clean Power Plan. More than 60 people attended the session held Sept. 15 at DEP's South-central Regional Office in Harrisburg.

"DEP is in full listening mode," Quigley said as he opened the floor to 27 speakers.

Citizen and stakeholder groups discussed their concerns about the plan to reduce carbon emissions in Pennsylvania by 33 percent by 2030. A majority of the speakers underscored the need for DEP to submit a plan tailor-made for Pennsylvania's unique energy portfolio while still growing the economy.

Speakers offered suggestions such as building greener buildings, emphasizing nuclear power, and focusing on natural gas power as ways Pennsylvania can comply with the Clean Power Plan.

Upcoming listening session locations can be found [here](#).

Source: DEP News, 9/17/2015

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