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# WUC

Water Utility Council of the  
PA-Section, American Water  
Works Association (PA-AWWA)



## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

From Milliron & Goodman Government Relations, LLC.

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200 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street ♦ Suite 1500 ♦ Harrisburg, PA 17101 ♦ Phone: 717-232-5322 ♦ Cell: 717-574-3963 ♦  
Erik A. Ross, Senior Associate ♦ [www.millirongoodman.com](http://www.millirongoodman.com)

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Harrisburg, PA

[Erik@millirongoodman.com](mailto:Erik@millirongoodman.com)

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*PA- Section, American Water Works Association  
National Association of Water Companies  
Water Works Operators' Association of Pennsylvania*

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### **Pennsylvania Tax Filing Season Opens for Tax Year 2018 Returns are due April 15, 2019**

**P**ennsylvania's tax filing season opened today and the Department of Revenue is reminding taxpayers that they can electronically file their personal income tax returns. The filing deadline to submit 2018 tax returns is April 15, 2019.

"Pennsylvanians who file their state taxes electronically benefit from faster processing and receive their refunds sooner," Revenue Secretary Dan Hassell said. "We encourage all Pennsylvania taxpayers to take advantage of easy-to-use electronic filing options."

#### Padirectfile

Padirectfile, a free, secure, state-only electronic income tax filing system, is available through the Department of Revenue's website. For more information or to begin filing, visit <https://padirectfile.state.pa.us/authentication.asp>.

#### Electronic Filing Free

Free electronic filing options are available to file state and federal returns using software from a reputable vendor (income limits may apply). More vendor information is available on the department's website

<https://www.revenue.pa.gov/OnlineServices/PersonalIncomeTax-Services/efile/Pages/PA%20Free%20File%20Vendors.aspx>.

#### Electronic Filing for a Fee

Paid tax preparers and commercial tax preparation software providers that offer e-filing for a fee may begin processing returns.

E-filing offers advantages not available to taxpayers filing by paper, including error-reducing automatic calculators, instant confirmation of successful filing, faster refund processing and direct deposit options.

#### April 15 Deadline

All taxpayers who received more than \$33 in total gross taxable income in calendar year 2018 must file a Pennsylvania personal income tax return by midnight, Monday, April 15, 2019.

## Avoid Filing Errors

Taxpayers are reminded to provide their complete Social Security numbers when filing a return to avoid a delay in processing a return and refund. The department protects the confidentiality of the information.

When filing a joint return with a spouse, the Social Security numbers of both individuals should be included.

## Taxpayer Service and Assistance

Personal income tax assistance is available through the department's Online Customer Service Center <https://revenue-pa.custhelp.com/> and by calling 717-787-8201 between 7:30 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Taxpayers may also visit a Department of Revenue district office <https://www.revenue.pa.gov/GetAssistance/ContactUs/Pages/District-Offices.aspx>, listed in the government pages of local phone directories, for basic state personal income tax filing assistance. Assistance at district offices is available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and taxpayers are encouraged to bring their Social Security cards with them to facilitate tax filing.

Taxpayers can check the status of their refunds online by visiting the department's website and selecting the Where's My Income Tax Refund? <https://www.doreservices.state.pa.us/Individual/RefundDefault.htm> link on the department's homepage; or by calling 1-888-PATAXES to find out the status of their refunds. Taxpayers will be prompted to provide their Social Security number and requested refund amount to obtain the current status.

Free tax forms and instructions are available at <https://www.revenue.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

Source: PA Department of Revenue, 1/28/2019

## **Senator White to Retire from the Senate**

**O**n January 29, 2019, Senator Don White announced his retirement from the Pennsylvania State Senate as of February 28. Senator White made the announcement as part of the Senate's session in the State Capitol, Harrisburg.

Click the below link to view Senator White's announcement on the floor of the Senate <https://pasen.wistia.com/medias/n3ti3oamy9>.

Click the below link to view the introduction of Senator White by Senate President Pro Tempore Joe Scarnati (R-25) <https://pasen.wistia.com/medias/47q3p32i3f>.

Click the below link to view Senate Democratic Leader Jay Costa's (D-43) tribute to Senator Don White <https://pasen.wistia.com/medias/j0i7y4zhf8>.

Source: Senator White Press Release, 1/29/2019

## **Davis introduces bills to address water shutoff risk Bills will address metering, provide regulatory protection for consumers**

**S**tate Rep. Austin Davis, D-Allegheny, unveiled legislation designed to protect consumers, notably those who live in multi-unit housing complexes, from unexpected water shutoffs.

“When a single water meter is shared between all units of a building or complex, it can create a nightmare for residents,” Davis said. “There have been several instances in Pennsylvania where residents lost water usage because a homeowners association misappropriated the funds collected and the water utility suspended their service. No one should have to wonder if their water service will be cut off because of someone else’s irresponsible actions.”

One of Davis' bills would require homeowners associations that collect money from individual units and then pay water bills on their behalf to be

regulated by the state Public Utility Commission. A separate bill would require that if an individual unit of a multi-unit dwelling were to be sold, each occupied unit must have a separate water meter.

Davis said every Pennsylvanian has a right to clean, drinkable water.

“Pennsylvanians deserve a fair deal, no matter where they choose to live, and they should not have to worry about a surprise shutoff,” Davis said. “My legislation will ensure their rights – and access to water – are protected.”

Click below link to view **House Bill 291**  
<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billInfo/billInfo.cfm?sYear=2019&sInd=0&body=h&type=b&bn=291>

Click below link to view **House Bill 293**  
<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billInfo/billInfo.cfm?sYear=2019&sInd=0&body=h&type=b&bn=293>

Both bills are expected to be referred to the House Consumer Affairs Committee.

Source: Rep. A. Davis Press Release, 1/31/2019

## **Governor Wolf Outlines Plan to Restore Critical Pennsylvania Infrastructure**

*Massive Rebuilding Plan Funded by a Severance Tax Will Prevent Flooding, Eliminate Blight, Expand Broadband to All Pennsylvanians*

**G**overnor Wolf's vision for Pennsylvania includes vibrant towns and cities with new development, opportunities in rural and disadvantaged areas, and a modern, interconnected commonwealth.

"Over the past four years my administration has worked hard to improve our infrastructure and build strong, stable communities across the commonwealth," said Governor Wolf. "We've made progress, but we still have more work to do."

To achieve these goals, Governor Wolf is announcing a major new infrastructure initiative, Restore Pennsylvania, funded by the monetization of a commonsense severance tax. Restore Pennsylvania will invest \$4.5 billion over the next four-years in significant, high-impact projects throughout the commonwealth to help catapult Pennsylvania ahead of every state in the country in terms of technology, development, and infrastructure.

"It is far past time that Pennsylvanians stop allowing our commonwealth to be the only state losing out on the opportunity to reinvest in our communities," said Governor Wolf. "And as long as that is allowed to continue - my vision of a restored Pennsylvania that is ready to compete in the 21st century economy will never become reality." Encompassing new and expanded programs to address five priority infrastructure areas outlined below, Restore Pennsylvania projects will be driven by local input about local needs. Projects identified by local stakeholders will be evaluated through a competitive process to ensure that high priority, high impact projects are funded and needs across Pennsylvania are met.

### **High Speed Internet Access**

Restore Pennsylvania will provide funding to completely bridge the digital divide in every community in Pennsylvania, making Pennsylvania a better place to work, do business, and live. Grants will be available to support installation of infrastructure to bring high speed internet to every corner of the commonwealth. Funding will support every phase of the process from feasibility testing to connection.

### **Storm Preparedness and Disaster Recovery**

#### Critical Flood Control Infrastructure:

Restore Pennsylvania will provide funding for flood prevention that will protect against severe weather and save homes and businesses in flood prone areas across the state. Restore Pennsylvania will provide funding to help towns and cities prepare for flooding and severe weather, upgrade flood walls and levees, **replace high-hazard dams**, and conduct stream restoration and maintenance.

## Helping Families Rebuild:

Restore Pennsylvania will establish a disaster relief trust fund to assist individuals who suffer losses that are not compensated by Federal Emergency Management Agency or other programs.

## Stormwater Infrastructure:

Restore Pennsylvania will provide grants to municipalities moving forward with Pollutant Reduction Plans to help them implement creative solutions to comply with their stormwater mandates and transform their communities. Additional state funding will reduce the need for new stormwater fees, which have proven unpopular where they have been proposed. Additional incentives will be provided for communities that are working collaboratively with their neighbors to tackle the problem in the most efficient manner possible.

## **Downstream Manufacturing, Business Development, and Energy Infrastructure**

### Downstream Manufacturing: Pad Development, Business Development, Site Selection, and Energy Efficiency:

Restore Pennsylvania will provide funding for infrastructure that helps build manufacturing facilities and other downstream businesses for the natural gas produced in Pennsylvania while helping businesses and individuals use more of Pennsylvania's natural gas in their homes, creating jobs, lowering costs, and improving energy efficiency.

### Getting Natural Gas to Businesses:

Restore Pennsylvania will provide increased spending flexibility to ensure that more communities and businesses across the state have access to low-cost, clean-burning natural gas. Restore Pennsylvania will also provide grants to help downstream businesses install combined heat and power and micro-grid systems at existing or new facilities.

## **Demolition, Revitalization, and Renewal**

### Blight Demolition and Redevelopment:

Restore Pennsylvania will increase resources for addressing blight by providing financial resources at the local level to establish land banks and acquire and demolish blighted buildings in order to create new development opportunities or provide new green space. The funding will be administered by entities established by the legislature as land banks or demolition funds.

### Brownfield Clean-Up:

Restore Pennsylvania will provide funding to ensure the continuation of Pennsylvania's Brownfields program, ensuring that more sites can be returned to use for recreation, or returned to the tax rolls as commercial, residential, or industrial sites.

### Contaminant Remediation:

Restore Pennsylvania will fund expanded efforts to remove lead and other contaminants from communities.

### Green Infrastructure:

Restore Pennsylvania will provide significant new funding to enable new environmental projects and new recreational opportunities across the state, including infrastructure and maintenance in state parks, creation and revitalization of new local parks, and funding for new hiking, biking, and ATV trail projects.

## **Transportation Capital Projects**

Restore Pennsylvania will provide funding for local road upgrades, create new flexible funding options for businesses that need local infrastructure upgrades to enable development projects, and multimodal and large-scale capital projects for transit.

### PA Back Roads:

Restore Pennsylvania will accelerate progress of projects to resurface, repave and repair four-digit

roads and provide technical assistance and funding for dirt and gravel roads throughout the state.

#### Business OnRamp:

Restore Pennsylvania will create a flexible funding tool to enable capacity upgrades needed to support development where Transportation Infrastructure Investment Funds are not available.

#### Public Transit System Projects:

Restore Pennsylvania will support new capital projects at public transit capital projects throughout the state.

Many members of the legislature recognize the need to invest in communities across Pennsylvania.

"As the Democratic chairman of the House Finance Committee, I appreciate the difficulty behind fairly and effectively raising revenue," said Rep. Jake Wheatley. "This is a reasonable severance tax, with exciting new ideas on how to maximize our investment. That's why I'm pleased to be one of the prime sponsors of this legislation, along with looking forward to working with the governor and my Republican colleagues to finally get this done."

"Restore Pennsylvania is a bold and innovative plan to inject billions of dollars into infrastructure projects across the commonwealth through a fair severance tax," said Senator John Yudichak. "I applaud Governor Wolf for working in a bipartisan fashion to craft a plan that will benefit all Pennsylvanians."

"It is time that we faced our responsibilities honestly and tapped our vast natural gas resources in a way that will allow us to invest in Pennsylvania's future success," Rep. Thomas Murt said. "Restore Pennsylvania will help us upgrade transportation infrastructure, fight blight, and address contamination issues like lead and PFAS in my district and throughout the commonwealth."

"We can no longer afford to lose billions of dollars by not having a sensible severance tax on drillers," said Sen. Tom Killion. "I thank Governor Wolf for his strong leadership on this issue. I am proud to work with Senator Yudichak on passing

the governor's proposal in the senate. Let's finally get this done for Pennsylvania's families."

View the full plan here  
<https://www.governor.pa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/20190131-restore-pa.pdf> .

Source: Governor Wolf's Press Office, 1/31/2019

## **PennDOT: Fees for Optional REAL ID Products**

The Department of Transportation indicated they will make REAL ID driver's licenses and identification cards available to residents starting in March of 2019. More information on the REAL ID driver's licenses and identification cards is available on the Pennsylvania Bulletin.

Source: Pennsylvania Bulletin, 2/2/2019  
<https://www.pabulletin.com/secure/data/vol49/49-5/157.html>

## **Executive Order – Commonwealth Leadership in Addressing Climate Change**

Governor Tom Wolf issued an executive order to reestablish the Governor's Green Government Council to address climate change. More information on the executive order is available on the Pennsylvania Bulletin.

Source: Pennsylvania Bulletin, 2/1/2019  
<https://www.pabulletin.com/secure/data/vol49/49-5/131.html>

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*This newsletter provides general information, not legal advice as to any specific matter. It should not be used as a substitute for appropriate legal advice.*