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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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### Protecting the Environment for All Pennsylvanians Earth Day Celebration April 22

Join First Lady Frances Wolf and Pennsylvania environmental, wildlife and conservation agencies for a virtual Earth Day 2021 Celebration <https://www.residence.pa.gov/earth-day/Pages/default.aspx> on April 22 starting a 10:00 a.m.

The theme is Protecting the Environment for All Pennsylvanians, and the event will include activities from the departments of Environmental Protection, Conservation and Natural Resources, Education, and Agriculture, as well as the Game Commission.

Earth Day 2021 will recognize the 50th Anniversary of the Environmental Rights Amendment, which guarantees citizens the right to clean air, pure water, and the preservation of the natural, scenic and historic value of the environment.

The amendment says -- "The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people."

Click here for the **Earth Day 2021 Virtual Exhibit Hall** [on the day of the event]  
<https://www.residence.pa.gov/earth-day/exhibit-hall/Pages/default.aspx>.

Click here for **Earth Day 2021 Livestream** [on the day of the event]  
<https://www.residence.pa.gov/earth-day/Pages/Livestream.aspx>.

Livestream events will also be available through the **Governor's Residence Facebook page**  
<https://www.facebook.com/governorsresidence/>.

Visit the **Earth Day 2021 Celebration website** for more information  
<https://www.residence.pa.gov/earth-day/Pages/default.aspx>.

**Source:** PA Environmental Digest, 4/17/2021

### PUC Recognizes Safe Digging Month

*Emphasizes Importance of Calling 8-1-1 Before Any Excavation Project; Encourages Utilities and Municipalities to Explore Project Coordination*

The month of April is National Safe Digging Month, and the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) took the opportunity today to remind consumers, businesses and contractors of the importance of identifying underground infrastructure before beginning to dig -

as well as encouraging utilities and municipalities to explore the benefits of closer coordination for infrastructure projects.

### PA One Call (8-1-1)

"Spring traditionally brings more construction and home improvement activity, which can increase the risk of damage to underground utility lines when proper safeguards are not taken," said Commissioner John F. Coleman Jr. "Every hit on an underground line poses a danger to contractors, utility workers and nearby residents, along with the possibility of service interruptions, environmental damage and costly repairs to damaged lines - which is why it is essential to contact the Pennsylvania One Call (PA One Call) system by calling 8-1-1 before any excavation work, to ensure that lines are properly located and marked."

State law requires contractors and residents to contact PA One Call at least three business days prior to excavation - triggering alerts to all utilities within an intended digging area and prompting utilities to mark where their facilities are located. Pennsylvanians can dial 8-1-1 to connect with the One Call system, while out-of-state residents or businesses can call 1-800-242-1776.

### Coordinate PA - Project Collaboration

Commissioner Coleman also encouraged utilities, contractors and municipalities to explore the added benefits of the PA One Call system's "**Coordinate PA**" <https://www.pa1call.org/pocs/7f31d515-d97c-4158-ae3b-eb1eddeb3039/Coordinate-PA> program, which can help better coordinate project schedules, fostering collaboration and potential cost savings.

"Collaboration on projects is a 'win-win' for everyone involved," noted Commissioner Coleman. "For example, if a utility is planning to replace underground lines in a particular area in August, but the local municipality is planning to repave those streets in June, it would be better and more cost-effective for both entities to coordinate their schedules so that construction work is complete before the repaving begins, rather than digging up a new street."

Closer collaboration and better information about project schedules can also help multiple utilities coordinate their schedules in communities or neighborhoods - avoiding repeated street closures and multiple repairs in the same area, which is not only expensive, but also disruptive to local businesses and residents. Commissioner Coleman encouraged municipalities, utilities and contractors involved in utility work to explore the potential benefits of Coordinate PA.

### The PUC Damage Prevention Committee

The PUC's Damage Prevention Committee (DPC) was created in 2017, when Pennsylvania's the "One Call Law" was enhanced, with a focus on reducing the number of "hits" on underground utilities. Part of the PUC's independent Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement, which also includes the Pipeline Safety Division, the DPC was modeled after successful programs in other states. The DPC meets regularly to review alleged violations of the Act and makes determinations as to the appropriate response including, but not limited to, the issuance of warning letters or administrative penalties.

### About the PUC

The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission balances the needs of consumers and utilities; ensures safe and reliable utility service at reasonable rates; protects the public interest; educates consumers to make independent and informed utility choices; furthers economic development; and fosters new technologies and competitive markets in an environmentally sound manner.

Visit the PUC's website at <http://www.puc.pa.gov/> for recent news releases and video of select proceedings. You can also follow us on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube. Search for the "Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission" or "PA PUC" on your favorite social media channel for updates on utility issues and other helpful consumer information.

**Source:** PUC Press Release, 4/15/2021

## Pennsylvania's March Unemployment Rate Down to 7.3% Labor Force Continues to Increase

On April 16, 2021, the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) released its employment situation report for March 2021.

Pennsylvania's unemployment rate was down one-tenth of a percentage point over the month to 7.3 percent in March. The U.S. rate declined two-tenths of a percentage point from February to 6.0 percent. The commonwealth's unemployment rate was 2.2 percentage points above its March 2020 level while the national rate was up 1.6 points over the year.

Pennsylvania's civilian labor force – the estimated number of residents working or looking for work – increased 1,000 over the month as employment rose slightly more than unemployment declined.

Pennsylvania's total nonfarm jobs were up 24,000 over the month to 5,678,500 in March, the 10th gain in the past 11 months. Jobs increased in 10 of the 11 industry supersectors with the largest volume gain in education & health services (+8,500). Over the year, total nonfarm jobs were down 369,200 with declines in all supersectors.

Additional information is available on the L&I website at [www.dli.pa.gov](http://www.dli.pa.gov).

**Note:** The above data are seasonally adjusted. Seasonally adjusted data provide the most valid month-to-month comparison.

**Source:** PA Department of Labor & Industry, 4/16/2021

## DRBC Announces Start of Basin-Wide Reservoir Storage Study

### *Feasibility Study to Review Freshwater Storage Options to Meet Drought and Climate Adaptation Needs in Delaware River Basin*

On April 14, 2021, the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) announced the start of a Basin-wide study to explore the feasibility of additional freshwater storage to meet future water availability, climate adaptation, drought management and flow management needs. Mott MacDonald was selected through a competitive process to perform the required planning and engineering services to support DRBC staff.

"The Delaware River Basin Compact authorizes the DRBC to conduct and sponsor research on the Basin's water resources, specific to their use, planning, conservation and protection," said DRBC Executive Director Steve Tambini, P.E. "DRBC's water resource management programs ensure that we plan for water security in the Basin, now and into the future."

In addition to the traditional water resource planning drivers to address designated uses such as recreation, public water supply, industry, agriculture and aquatic habitat, we know the water resources of the Basin will be impacted by climate change. The Basin is expected to experience changes in the seasonality and volume of streamflows. The Delaware River is subject to tidal influence below Trenton, N.J./Morrisville, Pa., and, as such, sea level rise will impact the location of the salt front in the Delaware River Estuary. The availability of adequate freshwater storage is critical to manage complex water needs including the management of salinity in the Estuary.

"The DRBC Commissioners and staff understand that water security for the Basin requires: water availability, water resiliency, clean water and water equity. Having adequate freshwater storage now and in the future supports all water security objectives." Tambini said. "This first-step inventory and feasibility study of additional freshwater storage complements other studies by DRBC and its member states."

This study also complements the ongoing F.E. Walter Re-evaluation Study, being led by the U.S.

Army Corps of Engineers, with DRBC as one of the non-federal sponsors. The DRBC has publicly supported maintaining and protecting the existing uses of the F.E. Walter Reservoir for flood risk management and recreation and has affirmed and recognized the value of the existing uses to the region and to the Basin.

In July 2019, the DRBC published a Request for Qualifications for an engineering consultant to perform the study. The DRBC Commissioners approved a Resolution for the Minutes in March 2020 authorizing the study to proceed. In January 2021, the consulting firm Mott MacDonald was chosen. Funding for this study, which will take about 18 months, comes from the Commission's Water Supply Storage Facilities Fund.

The DRBC is an interstate-federal government agency created in 1961 by concurrent compact legislation, marking the first time that the federal government and a group of states joined together as equal partners in a river basin planning, development and regulatory agency. The five Commission members are the governors of the basin states (Delaware, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania) and the commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' North Atlantic Division, who represents the federal government.

To learn more about the Commission, please visit <http://www.drbc.gov> or follow DRBC on Twitter at [https://urldefense.com/v3/\\_https://twitter.com/DRBC1961/\\_;!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!a-ZUYGqtRHFt80t8kIYRo8HOPjMoQ8wb2lrgM0R3QLsqUZ2bVTJ5Us1mGPdWhsbf5KtRp2bK7sk\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://twitter.com/DRBC1961/_;!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!a-ZUYGqtRHFt80t8kIYRo8HOPjMoQ8wb2lrgM0R3QLsqUZ2bVTJ5Us1mGPdWhsbf5KtRp2bK7sk$).

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**Source:** DRBC Press Release, 4/14/2021

## Presentations available from April 15 DRBC WQAC Meeting

**D**RBC's Water Quality Advisory Committee (WQAC) met yesterday, April 15, 2021. We thank everyone who participated and provided input.

Presentations given (one still to come) are available at [https://www.nj.gov/drbc/about/advisory/WQAC\\_april152021.html](https://www.nj.gov/drbc/about/advisory/WQAC_april152021.html).

Also at the meeting, the minutes from the December 2020 WQAC meeting were approved. They are available at [https://www.nj.gov/drbc/about/advisory/WQAC\\_dec2020.html](https://www.nj.gov/drbc/about/advisory/WQAC_dec2020.html).

Please contact John Yagecic [john.yagecic@drbc.gov](mailto:john.yagecic@drbc.gov), with any questions.

**Source:** DRBC, 4/16/2021

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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.*