



Brian Dempsey, chair, House Ways & Means
Karen Spilka, chair, Senate Ways & Means
Robert DeLeo, Speaker of the House
Stanley Rosenberg, Senate President

The Wastewater Advisory Committee (WAC) to the MWRA supports increasing funding for the Department of Environmental Protection, and the Environmental League's "1% for the Environment" proposal. We are concerned by the long-term effects of cutting DEP's staff and budget.

According to the Massachusetts Budget & Policy Center, DEP and EoEA budgets' proposed funding level for Fiscal Year 2017 is nearly 14% lower than FY 2009 levels, adjusted for inflation. Critically, staff is now at 68.6% of 2009 levels. DEP used to monitor and publish water quality data for every water body in the state every five years. Monitoring and permitting reports are currently based on old data—from 2008 for the Mystic River and Boston Harbor, for instance, to as long ago as 2000 for the Deerfield and Ipswich rivers.

As organizations concerned with water quality, we are highly interested in independent, quality data on the water bodies that concern either our wastewater or water supply sources. Should MWRA's data, or that collected by our state's watershed organizations, be deemed inappropriate for any reason, there would be no independent source to use to verify it.

Further, there are consequences to neglecting water monitoring that impact our state's environment and economy:

- DEP cannot know how effective its current regulations are, nor improve them, without current data.
- The inventory of the state's waters is out of date, as is the condition of those waters
- Therefore, DEP cannot know if a development might affect a water body, whether to allow it or not, or whether a pristine water might be affected.
- The state is requiring developers to spend funds on stormwater management, but has no idea if the required changes are effective or necessary.

In addition, the low staff counts at DEP mean that development outside of 128 is virtually stalled, as it awaits permitting.

We urge you to restore the Department's budget to pre-2010 levels so that some of these issues can be adequately addressed.

Sincerely,

Taber Keally
Chairman, Wastewater Advisory Committee to the MWRA

WAC is a citizens' advisory committee to the MWRA on wastewater issues. We provide an independent forum for discussion of these matters. Environmental improvement, safety, cost and technical issues are all considered when formulating our recommendations.