

**WASTEWATER**  
**ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**TO THE MASSACHUSETTS WATER**  
**RESOURCES AUTHORITY**



Annual Report 2022-2023

# An Introduction to the Wastewater Advisory Committee:

The MWRA Board of Directors created WAC in 1990 to offer independent recommendations on wastewater policies and programs. WAC's mission is to be an independent public forum for holistic discussion of wastewater issues. Membership is designed to reflect the knowledge and interest of major affected constituencies: engineering and construction, environmental advocacy, planning, academic research, and business.

## Membership

**Craig Allen**, Craig A. Allen, FCAS

**Philip Ashcroft**, citizen member

**George Atallah**, GA Engineering & Consulting

**Wayne Chouinard** (Chair), Town of Arlington DPW

**Adriana Cillo**, Boston Water & Sewer

**James Ferrara**, National Grid

**Stephen Greene**, Howland-Greene Consulting, LLC

**James Guidod**, MWRA Advisory Board

**Taber Keally**, Neponset River Watershed Association

**Karen Lachmayr**, Harvard University

**Martin Pillsbury**, Metropolitan Area Planning Council

**Alfredo Vargas**, City of Newton, DPW

**Kannan Vembu**, (Vice Chair) AquaEnviroBio Solutions LLC----->

**Dan Winograd**, Woodard & Curran.



## Executive Director:

**Andreae Downs**: Andreae.wac@gmail.com

617-378-8972

## WAC's Contractual Duties:

1. Provide independent advice to the MWRA Board and staff on wastewater programs and policies directly related to the MWRA
2. Review & comment to the Authority on wastewater reports and proposed documents; offer independent advice on current and proposed wastewater program and policy directions to further MWRA objectives
3. Reflect the knowledge and interest of major affected constituencies, including
  - a. Engineering
  - b. Construction
  - c. Business/industry
  - d. Planning
  - e. Academic research
  - f. Environmental advocacy
4. Advise MWRA on wastewater planning

5. Increase citizen participation and education by providing MWRA with assistance in outreach. Review programs and explain plans & policies to citizens
6. Attend Authority working groups related to wastewater programs and policy, including the AB and WSCAC
7. Propose to the Authority ways to continue effective and efficient long-term public involvement in wastewater programs

## FY 2023 Highlights

The likely imminence of a draft NPDES permit for Deer Island focused much of WAC's attention throughout the year as we prepared our comments. The draft was published shortly before WAC's final meeting of FY23.

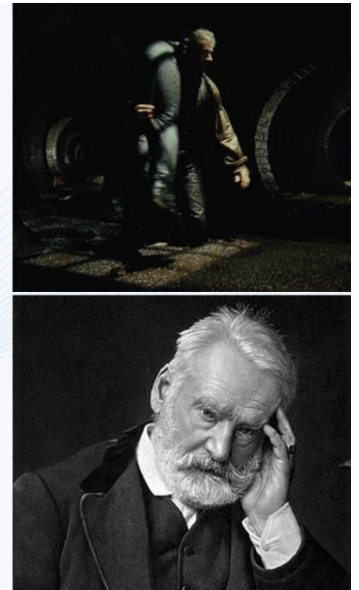
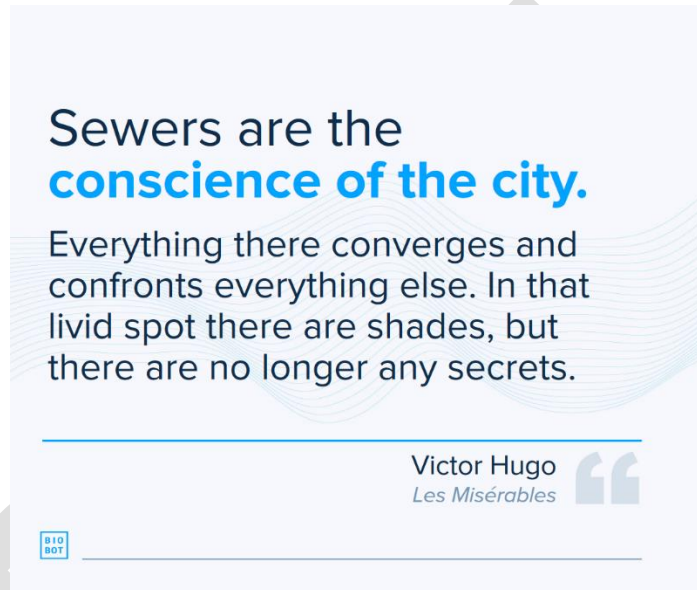
WAC's Bill H897 ultimately died in the Ways & Means Committee. With some

re-tooling and some new co-sponsors, S480 and H805, which would regulate the labeling of wipes not intended for the toilet, are before the current Legislature. A similar bill (the WIPPES Act) is on Capitol Hill. WAC has lobbied for these measures, and is helping with publicity and outreach. WAC is also following legislative efforts to contain and eliminate PFAS pollution, and commented on EPA's proposal to put PFAS on the CERCLA (Superfund) list.

As MWRA closed its Charlestown offices, WAC also packed for a move to Chelsea. In the process, WAC's executive director ensured that WAC's archives would be preserved and accessible to future WAC directors. Thinking further about succession, the director further updated the WAC Handbook, which outlines policies and procedures developed by the director and committee to date.

WAC membership has changed—Alfredo Vargas of Newton DPW and Jim Ferrara from National Grid joined in 2023. Mary Adelstein retired in March after 25 years of asking probing questions, recruiting new members, researching wastewater topics, and editing WAC comment letters and minutes. And Philip Ashcroft, who joined in November 2017 when head of the New England Water Innovation Network, resigned in June.

**Meetings:** In addition to the above topics, WAC discussed: MWRA's plans for a new Combined Heat & Power plant, Toxics Reduction & Control, PFAS and other contaminants, headworks design, the future of testing wastewater for public health, CSO and stormwater pollution, and MWRA budgets.



## Leadership

WAC was led again this Fiscal Year by Wayne Chouinard, P.E., from the Town of Arlington, a WAC member since 2013. Kannan Vembu of AquaEnviroBio Solutions served as Vice Chair.

The committee rotates leadership every other year, and in July, Mr. Vembu will take over as Chair and Dan Winograd as Vice Chair.



## Focus for 2023-24

The committee will continue to focus on MWRA maintenance, the future of biosolids recycling and how to do so most beneficially, how climate change may impact the system, and Combined Sewer vs. stormwater pollution.

WAC remains interested in cost containment and the environment—in particular efficiency, reliability, and renewable energy production in MWRA facilities.

Other areas of interest:

- Landfill capacity and costs; methane capture
- Toxics Reduction & Control
- MWRA's major capital projects
- MWRA's ongoing CSO modeling and testing
- Emerging contaminants, especially PFAS, and how regulators are reacting
- Other regulatory changes that may affect MWRA
- Stormwater management as it relates to sewers—MWRA and residual designation
- Emerging technologies for removing new contaminants
- How could AI impact MWRA?
- The future of Boston Harbor/Mass Bay monitoring science and possible successor to the Outfall Monitoring Science Advisory Panel (OMSAP)

