

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

# PARTNERING FOR PROGRESS



ASSOCIATION OF  
METROPOLITAN  
WATER AGENCIES

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## **MISSION**

AMWA's primary objective is to be the unified and definitive voice for the nation's largest publicly owned drinking water systems on regulatory, legislative and security issues. To this end, the association works with Congress and federal agencies to ensure safe and cost-effective federal drinking water laws and regulations and to develop federal-local partnerships to protect water systems and consumers against acts of terrorism.

AMWA is also committed to the collection and exchange of management, scientific and technical information to support competitive utility operations, effective utility leadership, safe and secure water supplies and effective public communication on drinking water quality.

Dear Colleagues,

At the 2015 International Water and Climate Forum AMWA organized last December, one of the most compelling themes – the need for partnerships to achieve climate resilience – was aptly summed up by Paula Verhoeven of Rotterdam. Her mayor often paraphrases an African proverb to say: “Go alone to go fast; go together to go farther.” The city puts this into practice with a holistic, multi-stakeholder resiliency strategy, as well as participation in 100 Resilient Cities, exchanging experiences with municipalities around the globe.

AMWA has long offered its member utilities opportunities to partner for progress on water sector issues. Legislative advocacy was amplified in 2015 when members contacted their elected officials with effective messages on issues such as the WIFIA fix and the positive train control mandate.

Collaborating in the regulatory arena, AMWA members and staff worked for viable outcomes in regulatory development. This was evident in the National Drinking Water Advisory Council process for revisions to the Lead and Copper Rule, where several AMWA members helped craft progressive, responsive recommendations.

AMWA and its sustainability committee were engaged throughout the year in furthering water utility sustainability, through actions such as responding to FEMA draft guidelines for implementing the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard and providing comments on Standard and Poor’s proposed sustainability ratings criteria for municipal bonds.

Members advanced the sector’s management practices through their contributions to AMWA’s utility financial database, awards program, Executive Management Conference presentations and Member-to-Member surveys. Through AMWA, members also backed the important water initiatives of Effective Utility Management and the Value of Water Coalition.

To support utility security, AMWA staff continued to build relationships with analysts at the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI and regional and state intelligence fusion centers. WaterISAC worked with utilities across the country to compile its Water Sector Threat Analysis Report, a valuable compilation of incidents, threats and suspicious activity occurring at water facilities.

In closing remarks at the Water and Climate Forum, former AMWA President Pat Mulroy commented: “Partnerships make us more resilient. Missed partnerships are not just missed opportunities, they are vulnerabilities.”

As I turn the AMWA presidency over to Scott Potter of Metro Water Services of Nashville, I urge all members not to miss the many opportunities AMWA provides to “go together to go farther” in our industry.

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**“Go alone to go fast; go together to go farther.”**

*–African Proverb*

Sincerely,



Charles M. Murray  
2015 AMWA President  
General Manager  
Fairfax Water



## UNITING TO ADVANCE LEGISLATIVE GOALS

2015 was a banner year for AMWA on Capitol Hill, as the association's efforts helped lead to the enactment of several new pieces of legislation that will aid the water utility community. This advocacy was often amplified by AMWA's utility members across the country, who partnered with the association to contact their own elected officials with a consistent and effective message.

AMWA's most notable legislative achievement came in December, when President Obama signed a new law that allows the financing of water infrastructure projects through a combination of tax-exempt debt and loans from the new Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) pilot program. The original WIFIA program, enacted in 2014, forbade such combined financing packages – a restriction of deep concern to the water utility community. In response, the association and its members worked together to educate lawmakers about this problem and the need for a speedy legislative fix. Through AMWA's one-on-one advocacy in D.C. and a coordinated letter writing campaign from member utilities from coast to coast, Congress heard the message and acted in a bipartisan manner to improve the law.

AMWA and its members also partnered for progress in 2015 when a federal “positive train control” mandate threatened to halt the rail delivery of essential water treatment chemicals at year's end. As this issue came to light over

the summer, AMWA warned Congress about the serious consequences such a move would have for water quality and public health. Simultaneously, individual AMWA members briefed their own congressional representatives about the expected local implications of a halt in rail treatment chemical shipments. These efforts, combined with those of other sectors reliant on rail traffic, led Congress to move expeditiously to revise the law and allow rail deliveries to continue uninterrupted.

Similar cooperative efforts between AMWA and its members occurred around the issues of cybersecurity information sharing legislation (which passed in 2015 with AMWA's support after revisions were made to clarify the eligibility of public water systems to participate) and bills to help communities and water systems adapt to the impacts of global climate change. And AMWA's 2015 Water Policy Conference in Washington brought utility officials face-to-face with influential lawmakers who set the course of water-related legislation on Capitol Hill.

Accomplishments throughout 2015 demonstrate what can be achieved when AMWA and its members present a united front to the nation's policymakers.

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Through AMWA's one-on-one advocacy in D.C. and a coordinated letter writing campaign from member utilities from coast to coast, Congress heard the message and acted in a bipartisan manner to improve the WIFIA law.



## WORKING TOGETHER FOR SOUND REGULATION

Collaboration is key to any successful policy or regulatory development process. Whether working with federal, state or local government agencies, other stakeholders, fellow AMWA members or all of the above, a collective voice on any issue conveys the additional power and influence needed to get things accomplished.


Over the course of 2015, AMWA partnered with Clean Water Action, the American Water Works Association and the Rural Community Assistance Program to provide feedback on U.S. EPA's proposed effluent limitation guidelines (ELGs) for steam electric power plant wastewater discharges. Working together, the group met with technical staff in EPA's Office of Water and with high-level EPA officials, as well as with the Council on Environmental Quality and the Office of Management and Budget/Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs to request greater consideration of the impacts on drinking water from bromides found in power plant discharges. The final ELGs were responsive to the group's concerns, with EPA putting forth several new or strengthened bromide recommendations and notification requirements in its final regulatory package. It was a great example of how a diverse group of stakeholders can partner to achieve a better outcome.

The past year also saw the culmination of the National Drinking Water Advisory Council (NDWAC) process for developing recommendations for revisions to the Lead and Copper Rule. From the working group crafting the initial recommendations to the full NDWAC review, the final submission reflected the perspectives of a wide variety of drinking water sector stakeholders. Several AMWA members were deeply involved throughout the process, working to craft recommendations that were progressive and responsive to the varied interests at the table, yet balanced and implementable from a drinking water utility operational and management perspective.

Teamwork and collaboration among AMWA members gives the association a particularly strong position in policy and regulatory discussions. Their collective feedback makes AMWA's comments – such as those submitted to inform EPA's work on its algal toxin strategic plan or potential revisions to chemical risk management plans – particularly effective.

Through partnering and effective information sharing, AMWA can speak with the amplified voice of hundreds of drinking water utilities. It is a voice that gets results.





**It is the teamwork and collaboration between AMWA members that gives AMWA a particularly strong voice in policy and regulatory discussions.**



## JOINING FORCES FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

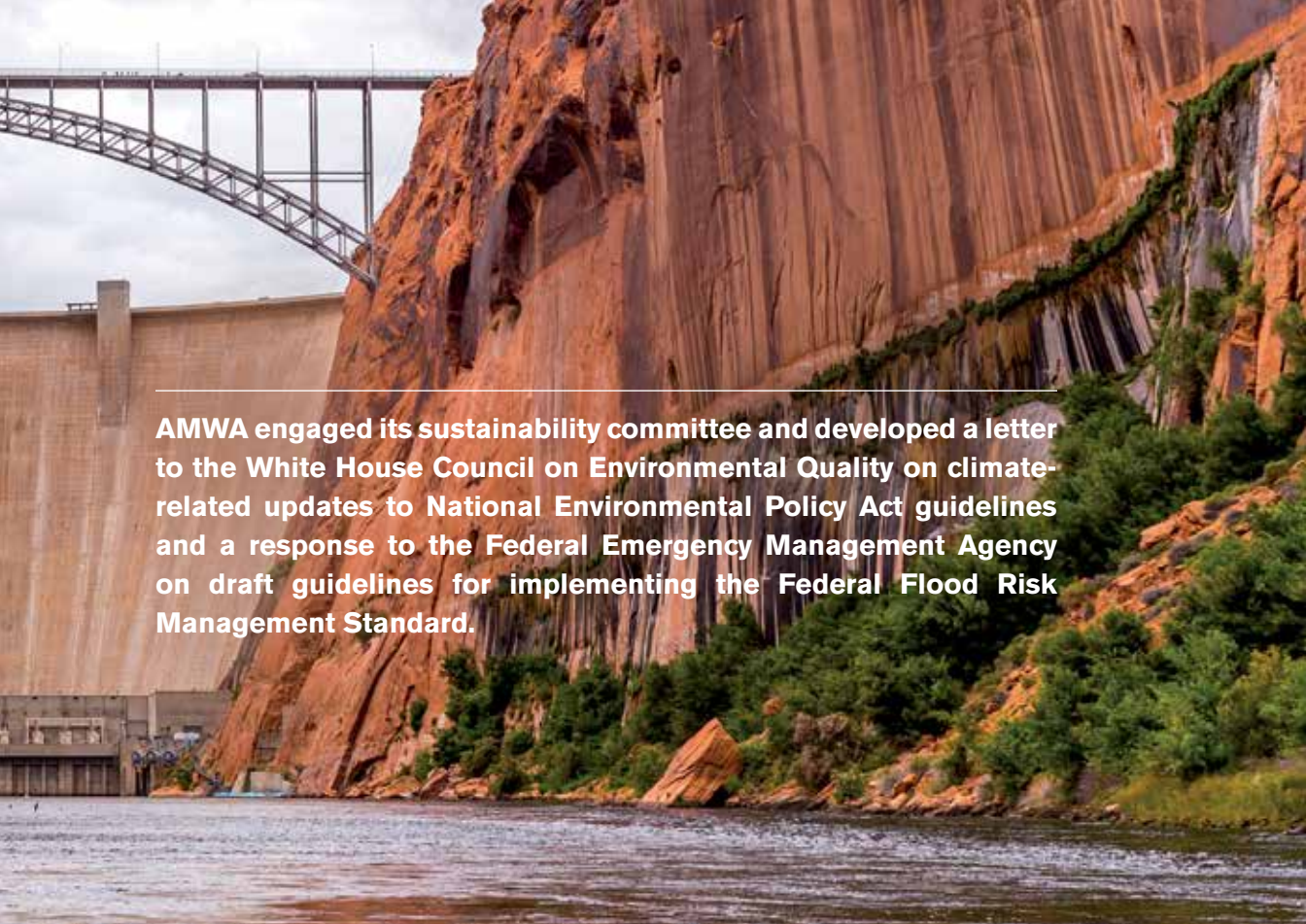
Throughout the year, AMWA partnered with others to advance the conversation on building a sustainable water utility – particularly in the areas of climate adaptation and overall resilience.

AMWA's increased focus on water reuse was evident in a panel discussion at the spring Water Policy Conference highlighting state, federal and academic perspectives on current and potential future policy on potable reuse. AMWA also worked with members to update the association's policy statement on alternative water resources development, which includes water reuse. The statement underscores that the association will continue to advocate for the ability of a local utility to make its own choices about the best options for its water supply portfolio.

The federal government released several draft policies and reports of interest to members, and AMWA responded by engaging its sustainability committee and developing comments.

A letter to the White House Council on Environmental Quality, for example, asked the council to ensure that any climate-related updates to National Environmental Policy Act guidelines facilitate utility adaptation approaches. A response to the Federal Emergency Management Agency on draft guidelines for implementing the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard urged a coordinated approach among federal agencies for the implementation of the standard to help decision makers facilitate projects for funding and support.





**AMWA engaged its sustainability committee and developed a letter to the White House Council on Environmental Quality on climate-related updates to National Environmental Policy Act guidelines and a response to the Federal Emergency Management Agency on draft guidelines for implementing the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard.**

AMWA continued to keep abreast of developments among bond ratings agencies and non-profit organizations about bond rating criteria and green bonds. AMWA submitted comments to Standard and Poor's on its proposed ratings criteria for municipal bonds.

The most significant sustainability initiative was realized when AMWA hosted the 2015 International Water and Climate Forum, an event designed to advance the discussion of climate adaptation and mitigation in the context of water sector utility strategic planning toward improved resilience. The meeting highlighted on-the-ground progress of utilities around the globe. Managers from 20 utilities discussed actions

they are taking to mainstream climate considerations into utility decision-making and planning in order to develop appropriate management responses.

The Forum provided water utility managers, practitioners and others with ideas, tools, resources and new connections to help integrate and embed climate resilience considerations into strategic planning and operations. Presentations and podcasts from the event are available online at [www.waterclimateforum.org](http://www.waterclimateforum.org).

## IN LEAGUE FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

Partnering to advance excellence in utility management is a hallmark of AMWA membership. Through AMWA's utility financial database, annual awards program, Executive Management Conference presentations and Member-to-Member surveys, members strengthen the water sector with their contributions and collaborations. The association also moves the needle by joining forces on initiatives including Effective Utility Management (EUM) and the Value of Water Coalition.

Results of AMWA's fourth biannual Utility Financial Information (UFI) survey were released in January in a new UFI database that provided in-depth financial information on the 102 utilities that participated. During a February webcast, survey results were discussed and examples of productive ways to use the data were introduced.

AMWA recognized utility excellence through its 2015 awards. Winners of the Sustainable Water Utility Management Award were: Austin Water, City of Bellevue Utilities, Water Works Board of the City of Birmingham, Central Arkansas Water, Charlotte Water, Chesterfield County Utilities Department, Contra Costa Water District, Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department, Prince William County Service Authority, Riverside Public Utilities, Santa Rosa Water and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission. Winners of the Platinum Award for Utility Excellence were: Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility, Aurora Water, Boston Water and Sewer Commission, Denver Water, East Bay Municipal Utility District, Las Vegas Valley Water District, Scottsdale Water and South Central Connecticut Regional

Water Authority. Fort Collins Utilities won the Gold Award for Exceptional Utility Performance.


AMWA collaborated with EPA and other water associations on an initiative to refresh the EUM framework. The association nominated representatives to a Steering Group tasked with reviewing the 10 Attributes and Keys to Management Success and incorporating new challenges and changes in management emphasis that have developed since the framework was introduced in 2007. The Group's report is expected in early 2016.

As part of the Value of Water Coalition, AMWA partnered with public and private water agencies, business and community leaders and national organizations to communicate the importance of water to the economic, environmental and social well-being of America. The Coalition was involved in high profile national events throughout the year, including Earth Day, Water Week, Infrastructure Week and the Coalition's Imagine a Day Without Water initiative.

Nineteen of the 30 water managers at the 2015 Water and Wastewater Leadership Center at the University of North Carolina's Kenan-Flagler Business School were sponsored by AMWA member utilities. The association continued its oversight of this unique residential leadership training program, which it co-founded.

Interest and participation in AMWA's Member-to-Member Inquiry program remained high in 2015, as results from 27 surveys were posted to the AMWA website during the year.





**AMWA collaborated with EPA and other water associations to refresh the Effective Utility Management framework and partnered in the Value of Water Coalition to communicate the importance of water to the economic, environmental and social well-being of America.**





**AMWA kept members apprised of federal and industry initiatives to support enhanced cybersecurity, and the association continued to manage WaterISAC.**



## INFORMATION SHARING FOR WATER SECURITY

Supporting utilities' efforts to secure critical infrastructure remained a priority for AMWA in 2015.

The association kept members informed about new security-related guidance, tools and training produced by EPA's Water Security Division, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. At the fall Executive Management Conference, AMWA featured a DHS representative, who discussed industrial control system security threats, and the East Bay Municipal Utility District's Clifford Chan, who discussed best practices for utility cybersecurity.

In support of improving the flow of threat information to water utilities, AMWA staff continued to build relationships with DHS analysts, the FBI, regional and state intelligence fusion centers and other sectors. AMWA also began exploring automated cyber threat indicator sharing, whereby members could securely and electronically receive and exchange attributes of potentially malicious email, attachments and websites that could deliver network viruses.

AMWA continued its management of the Water Information Sharing and Analysis Center (WaterISAC), the water sector's primary and most comprehensive resource for physical and cyber threat information and preparedness. WaterISAC hosted monthly

online cybersecurity threat webcasts and disseminated hundreds of articles and documents containing physical and cyber threat alerts, mitigation resources and best practices. WaterISAC also hosted a webcast with EPA and the Portland Water District on the role of labs in contamination threat response.

Both AMWA and WaterISAC remained active on the Water Sector Coordinating Council, comprised of utility representatives and industry staff who advise EPA and DHS on federal programs supporting water sector security.

## FURTHERING INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

To help utilities address the growing challenge of climate change resiliency, AMWA joined forces with U.S. and international water organizations to conduct the 2015 International Water and Climate Forum in December. A follow-up to the Forum AMWA organized in 2010, the event featured case studies of how utilities and communities are becoming more resilient, demonstrating that much progress has been made in five years.

More than 200 participants from North and South America, Europe, Australia, Asia and Africa learned about on-the-ground activities utilities are performing to plan for and address drought, sea level rise, a host of extreme weather events and future climate and urban uncertainties.

A key thread of the Forum was one of strategic partnerships between different levels of government, watershed neighbors, technology companies, customers and beyond – demonstrating that utilities are transitioning from reactive to proactive solutions to become more resilient. Another thread was the need for human capital, human acumen and social strategies that can be connected to infrastructure strategies.

AMWA members presenting on the program included Maureen Stapleton of San Diego County Water Authority, Rob Pritchard of Calgary Utilities and Environmental Protection Department, Douglas Yoder of Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Authority, Cedric Grant of the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans, Clifford Chan of East Bay Municipal Utility District, Jim Lochhead of Denver Water, Ray Hoffman of Seattle

Public Utilities, Angela Licata of New York City Department of Environmental Protection, Sue Schneider of Spartanburg Water and Harlan Kelly of San Francisco Public Utilities Commission.

In the spring of 2016 AMWA will release a report on the Forum’s key themes and future milestones for the water utility sector’s climate resilience progress.

AMWA members also participated in the international conference “Water, Megacities and Global Changes,” hosted in Paris by the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture. The meeting, which coincided with the COP21 climate summit, brought together researchers, water service providers for large cities, politicians and representatives of leading civil society organizations to provide the starting point of a new cooperation network between megacities in the field of water. AMWA members on the program included Emily Lloyd and Angela Licata of New York City Department of Environmental Protection and John Sullivan of Boston Water and Sewer Commission.



# INTERNATIONAL Water & Climate Forum 2015 DECEMBER 7-9 SAN DIEGO

Forum participants learned about on-the-ground activities utilities are performing to plan for and address drought, sea level rise, a host of extreme weather events and future climate and urban uncertainties.



## PARTICIPATING IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

AMWA members are leaders of their utilities and in their communities, and the association provides many opportunities for them to hone their leadership skills while providing vital service to the water sector and their peers through their volunteer involvement in AMWA's many initiatives.

AMWA committee chairs in 2015 included:

- Legislative Committee – Jeff Szabo, Suffolk County Water Authority
- Regulatory Committee – Carrie Lewis, Milwaukee Water Works
- Utility Management Committee – Linda McCrea, Tacoma Water, and John Spatz, DuPage Water Commission
- Security Committee – Dean Dickey, Prince William County Service Authority, and Kevin Gertig, Fort Collins Utilities
- Sustainability Committee – Jim Lochhead, Denver Water
- Policy Committee – John Carman, Fort Worth Water Department
- International Committee – John Sullivan, Boston Water and Sewer Commission

At the Annual Executive Management Conference, Chuck Clarke of Cascade Water Alliance was awarded the AMWA President's Award for his extraordinary contributions to the association.

AMWA representatives to the Water Research Foundation Board of Trustees were Scott Potter of Metro Water Services of Nashville, Steve Schneider of Saint Paul Regional Water Services and John Sullivan of Boston Water and Sewer Commission.

Michael Wallis of East Bay Municipal Utility District represented AMWA on the AWWA Water Utility Council.

John Sullivan of Boston Water and Sewer Commission chaired the WaterISAC Board of Managers, which also included AMWA members Sue Schneider of Spartanburg Water and Kevin Gertig of Fort Collins Utilities. John Sullivan and Dean Dickey of Prince William County Service Authority were AMWA representatives on the Water Sector Coordinating Council. Sue Schneider and Mike Hooker of Onondaga County Water Authority also served on the Coordinating Council.

AMWA member Carrie Lewis of Milwaukee Water Works served as a member of EPA's National Drinking Water Advisory Council (NDWAC). Robert Steidel of the City of Richmond Public Utilities represented AMWA as a member of the NDWAC Lead and Copper Working Group, and Brian Haws of Austin Water Utility served as AMWA's representative on the Partnership for Safe Water Steering Committee.

AMWA's representatives on the steering group tasked with refreshing the Effective Utility Management framework were Steve Schneider of Saint Paul Regional Water Services and Scott Potter of Nashville Metro Water Services. Other AMWA members participating included John Sullivan of Boston Water and Sewer Commission, Dan Roberts of Palm Bay Utilities Department and Kathryn Sorensen of Phoenix Water.





**In addition to key leadership roles within their own organizations, AMWA member representatives contribute substantially to advance the interests of the water sector through their volunteer involvement in AMWA initiatives.**

AMWA's annual meeting in Savannah, Georgia featured presentations by members who shared valuable insights and lessons-learned from hands-on experience:

- *Building Effective Relationships with Elected and Appointed Officials:* John Sullivan of Boston Water and Sewer Commission, Cedric Grant of Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and Kathryn Sorensen of Phoenix Water Services;
- *Lead and Copper Rule Revisions:* Carrie Lewis of Milwaukee Water Works and Robert Steidel of City of Richmond Public Utilities;
- *California Dreamin' (of Rain) – Managing the Mega-Drought:* Jerry Brown of Contra Costa Water District and John Rossi of Western Municipal Water District;
- *Forging a Southeast Water Compromise in the ACF Basin:* Steve Davis of Columbus Water Works;
- *The Cyber Landscape – Current Threats and One Utility's Response:* Clifford Chan of East Bay Municipal Utility District;
- *Seeking a New Customer Service Dynamic:* Ray Hoffman of Seattle Public Utilities;
- *Taking the Battle for Source Water Protection to Court:* Bill Stowe of Des Moines Water Works;
- *Making Your Buried Assets Last: Optimization of Buried Infrastructure:* James Brammell of Louisville Water, Douglas Yoder of Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department, James Irvin of Howard County Public Works and Dan Smith of WaterOne.

The organizing committee for the 2015 International Water and Climate Forum included Douglas Yoder of Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department, Sandy Kerl of San Diego County Water Authority, Lurna Kaatz of Denver Water and Paul Fleming of Seattle Public Utilities.

## AMWA 2015 OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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*General Manager  
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