



ASSOCIATION OF  
METROPOLITAN  
WATER AGENCIES

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

**Unprecedented  
Challenges,  
Extraordinary  
Response**

## 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 sound utility operations, effective utility leadership, safe and secure water supplies, and effective public communication on drinking water quality.

## President's letter

---

Dear Colleagues,

The unprecedented challenges of a pandemic, extreme weather events, increased focus on racial and social justice, cybersecurity threats, and a financial crisis upended the nation in 2020. The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies and its members transformed operations, reimaged processes, maximized technology, and leveraged resources to continue the work of providing clean, safe water for drinking and hygiene for the country.

On Capitol Hill, AMWA worked on both sides of the aisle by providing critical congressional testimony on the Safe Drinking Water Act reforms and vital water infrastructure initiatives. AMWA also successfully challenged a proposal that would have rescinded appropriations for the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act. In the spring, AMWA and water sector partners pushed for a COVID-19 package that addressed water utility needs.

AMWA's Regulatory Committee continued its robust participation this year, contributing important expertise to a significant number of comment letters to the EPA. In particular, the long-awaited Lead and Copper Rule Revisions yielded extensive comments and recommendations from the association. AMWA also engaged EPA and other water sector organizations on lead service line replacement and source water protection.

In a year that demanded resilience, AMWA's sustainability program delivered a timely virtual forum on using insight from 2020 to improve future resilience measures. AMWA also collaborated with the Water Utility Climate Alliance to develop a new report describing the effects of heat impacts on utility personnel and assets. AMWA's management initiatives had strong member participation in the Virtual Executive Management Conference, 2020 INSIGHT financial survey, and annual awards program. AMWA also produced webinars featuring members discussing COVID-related topics.

In response to the ongoing threats members faced, AMWA proactively collected and disseminated resources and guidance via its COVID-19 Resources webpages on AMWA's redesigned website in 2020, ensuring utility security preparedness. AMWA and WaterISAC co-developed new resources to advise members on business continuity during a pandemic and to counter the spread of inaccurate information. WaterISAC also collaborated with EPA to prevent supply chain disruptions.

AMWA's accomplishments in 2020 underscore its water sector leadership and its membership commitment. Entering 2021 with uncertainties still looming, one certainty remains: water cannot fail. As AMWA reaches the milestone of 40 years serving the water sector, the association will continue to advance and elevate legislation, programs, and policies for all communities. AMWA looks forward to your continued contributions.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Schneider". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

*Steve Schneider, 2020 AMWA President*



*AMWA demonstrated its ability to work with lawmakers on each side of the political divide as both Democrats and Republicans invited the association to provide hearing testimony this year.*

## Legislative advocacy on Capitol Hill

---

Congressional members and staffers experienced a memorable year in 2020. While focusing on a number of ongoing water policy priorities, lawmakers also enacted a series of measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. AMWA was proud to play a central role in each of these efforts.

AMWA demonstrated its ability to work with lawmakers on each side of the political divide as both Democrats and Republicans invited the association to provide hearing testimony this year. AMWA delivered expert testimony for committee hearings on Capitol Hill three times during 2020: before the House of Representatives on EPA's Lead and Copper Rule and on potential reforms to the Safe Drinking Water Act, and before the Senate on the importance of funding water infrastructure and resilience initiatives.

As Congress began its early coronavirus response efforts in the spring, AMWA helped set the tone for the debate by collaborating with other stakeholders to outline the best ways to address water utility needs as part of a COVID-19 response package. AMWA specifically advocated for COVID-19 legislation that would make local water systems eligible for financial assistance delivered to local communities, dedicate funding to help low-income households pay their water

bills during the pandemic, and avoid implementing a broad water service disconnection moratorium. The series of COVID-19 bills that Congress enacted over the course of the year reflected each of these requests.

In 2020, AMWA also successfully challenged a House proposal that would have undermined EPA's Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program by rescinding appropriations that had been obligated in previous years but not yet spent. The plan would have effectively required many communities that had sought WIFIA funds but not yet closed their loan to begin their applications anew. AMWA identified approximately 50 projects that would have been affected and conducted outreach to lawmakers from those states and districts. Because of AMWA's endeavors, the problematic rescission was ultimately dropped from the FY21 spending bill approved for EPA.

With a new Congress and a new administration in office in 2021, drinking water will remain in policymakers' sights. AMWA looks forward to continuing to meet the challenges its members face by advocating on Capitol Hill.

## Navigating regulatory change through rough waters

---

During an unprecedented year, EPA made continued headway with multiple regulatory initiatives, including revising the Lead and Copper Rule (LCR), addressing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), and implementing the 2016 amendments to the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). In response, AMWA engaged its Regulatory Committee extensively throughout the year to provide EPA with relevant, constructive comments to ensure that public drinking water utilities' concerns were heard on the national stage. AMWA submitted a total of 17 comment letters to EPA in 2020.


To address the long-awaited LCR revisions, AMWA convened a group of 19 member utilities to draft the association's comprehensive 45-page comment letter to EPA early in the year. The agency finalized the LCR revisions days before the year's end, incorporating a fraction of AMWA's suggestions and leaving many problematic components. AMWA will continue to work with the Regulatory Committee to follow developments and take appropriate action.

Under the PFAS Action Plan EPA moved through multiple rulemakings, including the Fourth Regulatory Determination, where the agency proposed to regulate both PFOA and PFOS, two of the most well-studied PFAS. AMWA supported this action and awaits the publication of the final determination in 2021.

AMWA continued to push EPA to better utilize its authorities under TSCA to protect drinking water sources from contamination. In late 2020, AMWA weighed in on EPA's risk assessments for various chemicals such as 1,4-dioxane. Because EPA's current analyses fail to include drinking water exposures, AMWA believes that EPA's assessments are underestimating the true risk. The association has continually challenged this decision.

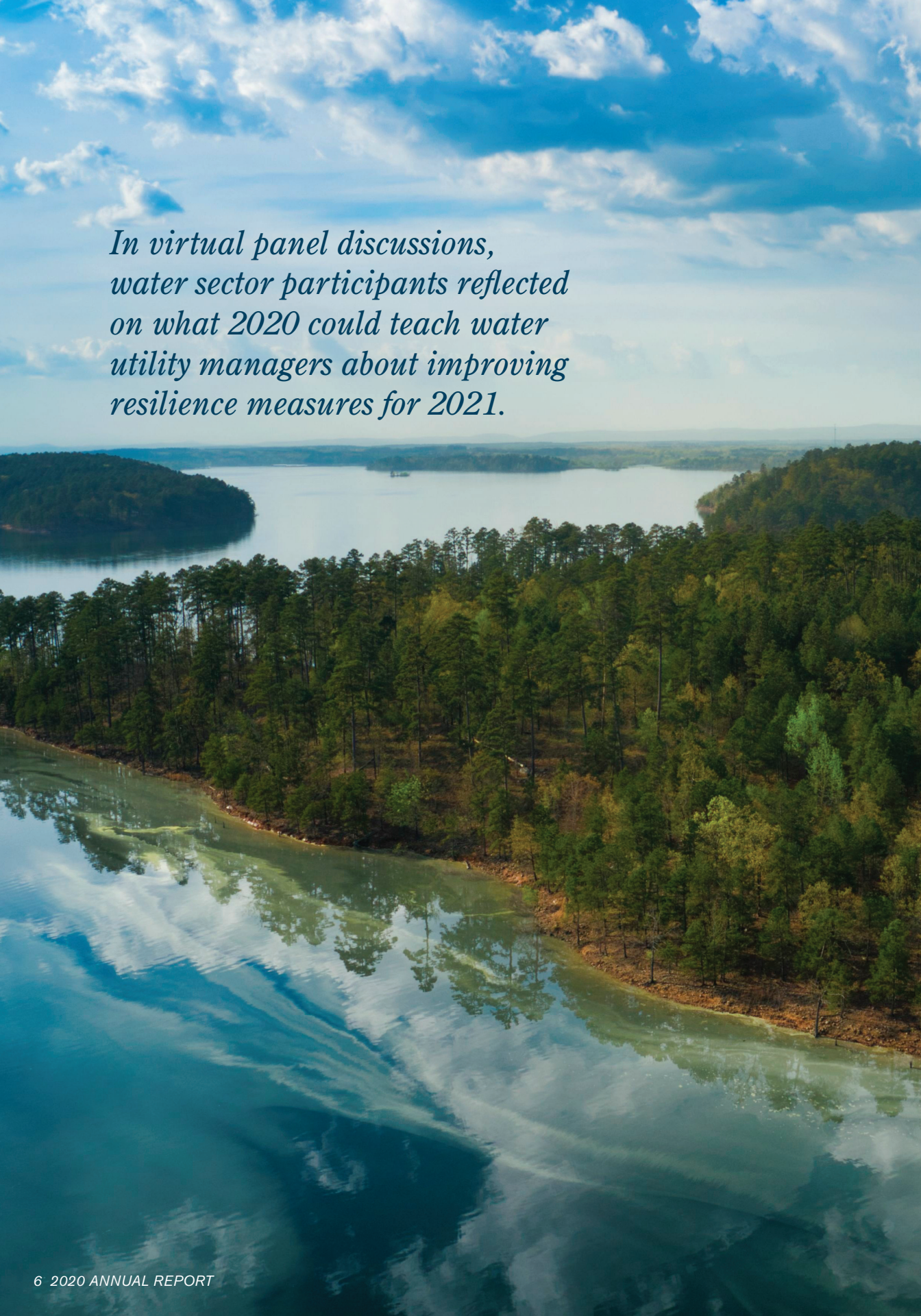
AMWA's participation in the Lead Service Line Replacement Collaborative will continue to help members implement the LCR revisions in the coming years. AMWA also maintains active membership in the Source Water Collaborative, engaging other member organizations to advocate for and protect source water.

Looking ahead, the association will stay well-informed of new regulatory developments, influence federal policy, and strengthen AMWA's standing within the regulatory and scientific communities.



*AMWA helps guide  
members through  
uncharted regulatory  
territory.*

*Photography: Metropolitan Water District of Southern California*



*In virtual panel discussions,  
water sector participants reflected  
on what 2020 could teach water  
utility managers about improving  
resilience measures for 2021.*



# Strengthening utility sustainability and resilience with tailored programs and concentrated advocacy

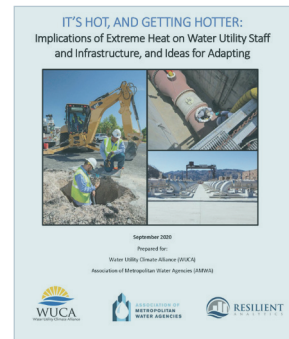
AMWA advocated for sound environmental and financial policies at the federal level and also developed programs and publications to improve member resilience and sustainability throughout 2020.

AMWA's Sustainability Committee advised staff on comments to the Council on Environmental Quality concerning proposed updates to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). AMWA's letter stressed the importance of maintaining the integrity of NEPA and the opportunity for public participation in the NEPA process. AMWA also developed comments for two proposals under the Endangered Species Act to codify the definition of critical habitat and provide a process for the Secretary of the Interior to identify exemptions to critical habitat designations. AMWA's letters urged the final definition and process to ensure the greatest regulatory certainty for utilities. AMWA submitted comments asking EPA to recognize in its revised community financial capability assessment guidance that ratepayer-borne costs to maintain and improve a community's drinking water system must be factored into its ability to afford Clean Water Act mandates.

In September, AMWA and the Water Utility Climate Alliance jointly published "It's Hot and Getting Hotter: Implications of Extreme Heat on Water Utility Staff and Infrastructure and Ideas for Adapting." The report describes the implications of heat impacts on utility personnel and assets over the next 50 years using five

case study utilities across the country, while highlighting how extreme heat can be expected to impact a utility's outdoor workers as well as utility infrastructure, such as HVAC systems, water treatment plants, pumps, and motors, among others. The report also notes expected cost increases to adapt personnel to these conditions, including increased training for working in extreme heat conditions and providing protective equipment.

The association collaborated with the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA), WaterISAC, and the Water Research Foundation to host the Water Utility Resilience Virtual Forum in December. With travel and gathering restrictions, the revised format and program reflected the unique resilience challenges created in 2020. The free event highlighted the water sector's response to the convergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, extreme weather events, and the national racial equity and social justice protests. It also focused on assessing and addressing the resulting financial impacts. During virtual panel discussions, participants reflected on how water utility managers could use lessons learned in 2020 to improve resilience measures for 2021 and beyond.



## Seeking solutions and setting precedents in utility management

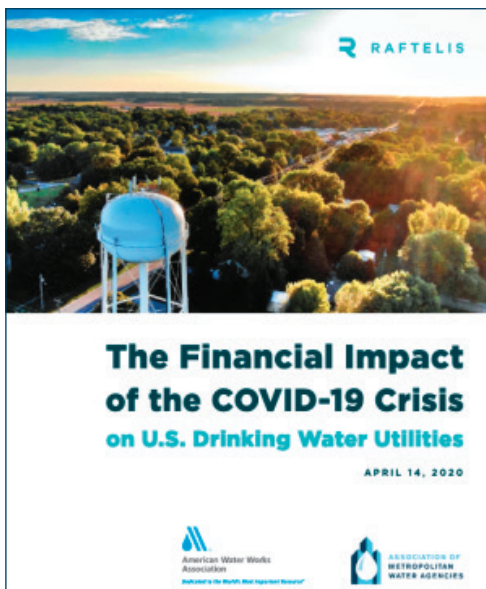
Solid vision statements, focused strategic plans, and forward-looking resilience policies developed over recent years served water utilities well throughout 2020, as pandemic-related management challenges arose on every front. AMWA's strong ethic of promoting executive interaction and innovation sharing proved pivotal, allowing water leaders to identify and institute novel operational approaches and new best practices.

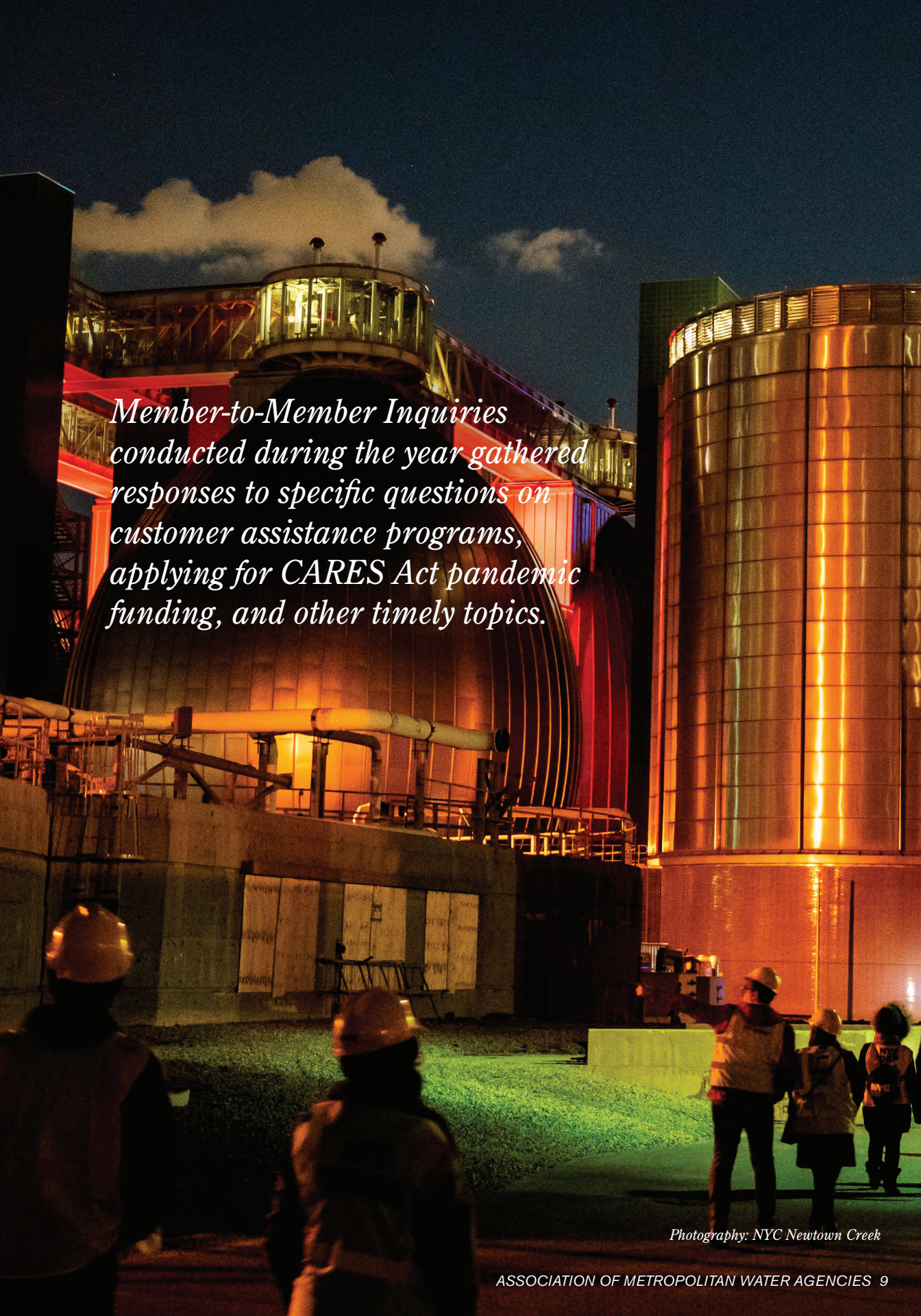
Regular COVID webinars in the spring and summer featured utility executives discussing management topics such as supply chain issues, personal protective equipment, precautions in field work, contact tracing, travel restrictions, financial ramifications, and personnel policies for essential workers, teleworking, and absenteeism.

AMWA surveyed utilities in March about their COVID-19 related projections specific to financial implications, water usage, and delinquencies. Raftelis used the data to develop "The Financial Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis on U.S. Drinking Water Utilities," which provided an early estimate of pandemic-related costs on drinking water systems.

In the fall, AMWA also supported a Raftelis survey that quantified delinquencies and revenue impacts of COVID-precipitated shut-off moratoriums and job losses. The findings, presented in a December webinar, will be used to support future messaging to Congress for pandemic relief funding. Ten Member-to-Member Inquiries over the year answered questions on customer assistance programs, applying for CARES Act pandemic funding, and other timely topics.

AMWA maintained its full schedule of utility management programs throughout 2020. The Virtual Executive Management Conference in October featured top water leaders and industry authorities in sessions on building resilient teams, outreach to customers on COVID-19, affordability and equity, and addressing emerging contaminants.





*Member-to-Member Inquiries conducted during the year gathered responses to specific questions on customer assistance programs, applying for CARES Act pandemic funding, and other timely topics.*

*Photography: NYC Newtown Creek*

*In 2020, AMWA updated its INSIGHT database and dashboard, which provide members with comprehensive, relevant, and comparable utility financial information.*






The association honored 13 member utilities with its top utility management awards: the Gold Award for Exceptional Utility Performance to Rochester Public Utilities; the Platinum Award for Utility Excellence to Central Arizona Project, Great Lakes Water Authority, and Houston Water; and the Sustainable Water Utility Management Award to Anaheim Public Utilities, Charleston Water System, Contra Costa Water District, El Paso Water, Greenville Water, KC Water, New York City Department of Environmental Protection, Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority, and South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority.

The seventh biennial INSIGHT survey was conducted in the fall to update AMWA’s comprehensive financial database and dashboard that provide uniquely relevant and comparable information for water utility benchmarking, trend identification, and financial reporting.

AMWA and its members collaborated extensively with EPA on utility management initiatives, supporting continuation of the HUB utility pilot and providing input to the agency’s Water Workforce Initiative. The AMWA-backed Water and Wastewater Leadership Center was successfully completed in the spring despite a mid-session shutdown of the University of North Carolina campus. Value of Water Campaign initiatives supported by AMWA included a national public opinion poll, an economic benefits analysis, United for Infrastructure Week, and Imagine a Day Without Water advocacy.





*AMWA rapidly reoriented its security program in early 2020 to advise members on the threats and consequences of the emerging pandemic.*

## All-hazard preparedness in an unyielding year

---

AMWA continued to support its members as they protected their communities against an ever-shifting array of hazards in 2020. AMWA also maintained its management of the Water Information Sharing and Analysis Center (WaterISAC), the primary information source for the water sector on physical and cyber security threats to critical infrastructure and mitigation information to address those threats.

AMWA rapidly reoriented its security program in early 2020 to advise members on the threats and consequences of the emerging pandemic. AMWA staff collected pandemic response resources from utilities and made them available to members to facilitate rapid responses to the crisis. AMWA also disseminated federal pandemic guidance through its website and newsletters. WaterISAC staff collaborated with EPA on issues related to potential supply chain disruptions and participated in an EPA work group that helped make cloth face coverings available to the water sector. AMWA successfully advocated for the explicit inclusion of the water sector's frontline workers in the National Academies' vaccination prioritization framework to ensure water utility staff could be among the first to receive vaccinations to protect against COVID-19.

AMWA and WaterISAC co-developed two products in 2020. "Business Continuity Planning for a Pandemic: A Reference Guide," an update of a 2006 document, expanded the scope beyond pandemic influenza to incorporate lessons learned from the early response to the COVID-19 pandemic. AMWA also partnered with WaterISAC to develop "Countering Drinking Water Disinformation: Protecting Public Health from Malicious Messaging," the first water sector-specific resource to address the risks associated with the proliferation of inaccurate information.

Throughout the year, AMWA and WaterISAC advised members on cyber and physical threats and provided guidance on response and preparedness. The associations disseminated advisories on water system cyberattacks and the sector's potential vulnerability to sabotage and vandalism. AMWA also partnered with NACWA to co-host the Water Utility Resilience Virtual Forum, which explored pressing resilience challenges facing water utilities.



*AMWA developed programs and resources to leverage local knowledge and experiences to a national scale.*

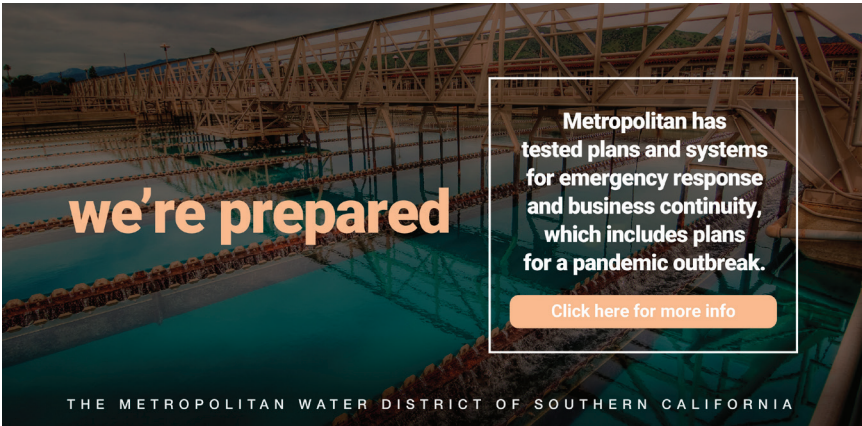


# Leveraging local utility responses to COVID-19 to benefit a national network of members

The crux of water utility resilience to the COVID-19 pandemic lies with AMWA's members and their staff who adapted and managed under a new paradigm. Members worked tirelessly to provide their communities with clean and safe water for drinking and for hygiene during this pandemic.

To support its members' response to the pandemic, AMWA developed programs and resources to leverage local knowledge and experiences across its national network. In addition to the multiple webinars and

surveys conducted throughout the year, AMWA developed COVID-19 Resources webpages featuring resources from 19 water systems. Members shared information and tools such as continuity of operations plans, personnel policies, staff appreciation videos, and public service announcements. Links to federal agencies provided vital updates on issues ranging from vaccine prioritization to workplace social distancing.



Graphics: Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

## Leading during crisis

---

In times of crisis, it can be easy to focus on problems, but effective leaders work to develop, implement, and communicate effective solutions. The top executives who represent AMWA member utilities exemplified leadership in 2020 by transforming the unexpected challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic into opportunities to learn, adapt, grow, and share. Members volunteered, collaborated, and took advantage of opportunities offered by the association to strengthen the water sector.

AMWA committee chairs in 2020 included:

Legislative Committee – **Jeff Szabo**,  
Suffolk County Water Authority

Regulatory Committee – **Ron Lovan**,  
Northern Kentucky Water District

Utility Management Committee – **John Spatz**, DuPage Water Commission, and  
**Marshall Brown**, Aurora Water

Security Committee – **Dean Dickey**,  
Prince William County Service Authority,  
and **Kevin Gertig**, Fort Collins Utilities

Sustainability Committee – **Rosemary Menard**, Santa Cruz Water Department

Policy Resolutions Committee – **Cathy Bailey**, Greater Cincinnati Water Works

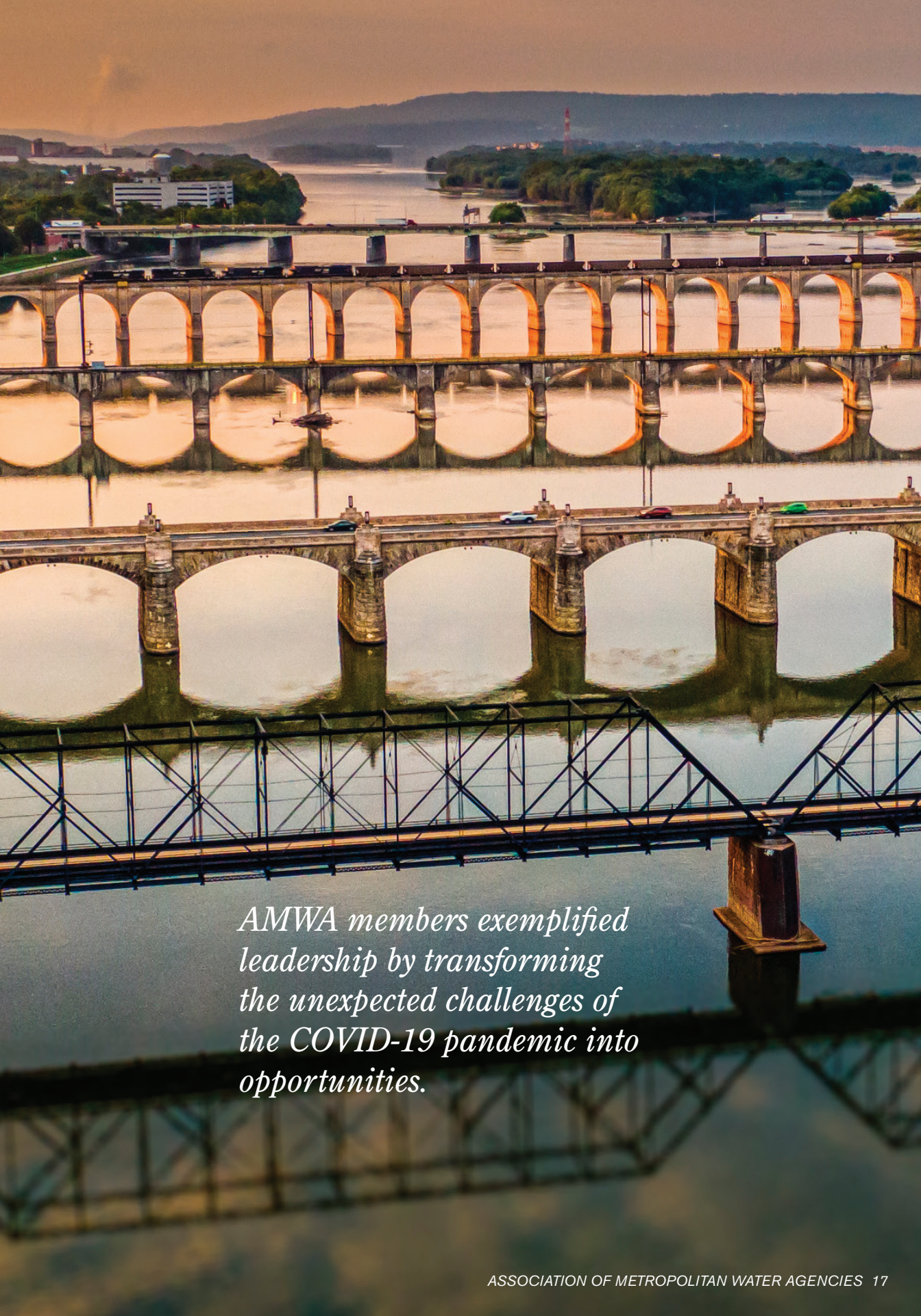
International Committee – **John Sullivan**,  
Boston Water and Sewer Commission

**Carrie Lewis** of Portland Water District served as chair of EPA’s National Drinking Water Advisory Council.

**David Lipsky** and **Carla Glaser** of New York City Department of Environmental Protection, **Jeff Swertfeger** of Cincinnati Water Works, and **Stephen Estes-Smargiassi** of Massachusetts Water Resources Authority were representatives for the Lead Service Line Replacement Collaborative.

**Andrea Song** of Denver Water represented the association on the Partnership for Safe Water Steering Committee.

AMWA’s witness for a February 11, 2020, House subcommittee hearing on EPA’s Lead and Copper Rule was **Angela Licata**, New York City Department of Environmental Protection.



*AMWA members exemplified leadership by transforming the unexpected challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic into opportunities.*

A scenic view of a large reservoir with terraced hillsides in the foreground and mountains in the background under a clear sky. The water is calm and reflects the light. The hillsides are a mix of brown and green, showing signs of agricultural activity. The sky is a pale blue with some light clouds.

*AMWA members volunteered,  
collaborated, and took  
advantage of opportunities  
offered by the association  
to strengthen the  
water sector.*

AMWA's representatives to the Water Research Foundation Board of Trustees were **Ron Lovan** of Northern Kentucky Water District and **Shane Chapman** of Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Other members on the board included **Randy Conner** of Chicago Department of Water Management, **John Entsminger** of Las Vegas Valley Water District, **Kathryn Sorensen** of Phoenix Water, **Rob Teegarden** of Orlando Utilities Commission, **Yvonne Forrest** of Houston Water, and **John Sullivan** of Boston Water and Sewer Commission (emeritus).

**Charles Stevens** of Kansas City Water 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, **Kevin Gertig** of Fort Collins Utilities, and **Rob Teegarden** of Orlando Utilities Commission. **John Sullivan** and **Dean Dickey** of Prince William County Service Authority were AMWA representatives on the Water Sector Coordinating Council.

Members of the EPA's HUB Utilities Task Force were **Tim Kraus** of Louisville Water Company and **Sue McCormick** of Great Lakes Water Authority. **Michael Armstrong** and WaterOne provided EPA with a water workforce case study, and **Ray Hoffman** of Cascade Water Alliance represented AMWA on EPA's Water Careers Task Force.



At the 2020 Virtual Executive Management Conference, AMWA's members shared their experiences on customer communication during the pandemic, addressing affordability issues, and regulating PFAS:

- *Affordability and Equity: How Utilities are Affecting Change* : **Greg Meszaros**, Austin Water and **Randy Hayman**, Philadelphia Water Department
- *Addressing Emerging Contaminants: What Works and What's Next*: **Jeff Szabo**, Suffolk County Water Authority
- *Outreach to Customers on COVID-19*: **Jonathan Leung**, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

# AMWA 2020 Officers and Board of Directors



**PRESIDENT**  
Steve Schneider  
*St. Paul Regional Water Services*



Shane Chapman  
*Metropolitan Water District of Southern California*



Ghassan Korban  
*Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans*



**VICE PRESIDENT**  
Angela Licata  
*New York City Department of Environmental Protection*



Rudolph Chow  
*Baltimore City Department of Public Works*



Carrie Lewis  
*Portland Water District*



**TREASURER**  
John Entsminger  
*Las Vegas Valley Water District*



Robert Davis  
*Cleveland Department of Public Utilities*



James S. Lochhead  
*Denver Water*



**SECRETARY**  
Kathryn Sorensen  
*Phoenix Water*



Scott Dewhirst  
*Tacoma Water*



Ron Lovan  
*Northern Kentucky Water District*



Mike Armstrong  
*WaterOne*



Steve Edgemon  
*Fairfax Water*



Sue McCormick  
*Great Lakes Water Authority*



Tad Bohannon  
*Central Arkansas Water*



Yvonne Forrest  
*Houston Water*



John P. Sullivan, Jr.  
*Boston Water and Sewer Commission*



Jerry Brown  
*Contra Costa Water District*



David Gadis  
*DC Water*



Jeffrey Szabo  
*Suffolk County Water Authority*



Richard Harasick  
*Los Angeles Department of Water and Power*



Timothy Thomure  
*Tucson Water*



Robert Hunter  
*Municipal Water District of Orange County*

## AMWA Staff

Diane VanDe Hei  
*Chief Executive Officer*

Michael Arceneaux  
*Chief Operating Officer*

Antoinette Barber  
*Director, Communications and Utility Management Programs*

Erica Brown  
*Chief Strategy and Sustainability Officer*

Eugenia Cadena  
*Senior Manager, Office Administration and Conferences*

Tim DeVenney  
*Manager, Website and Office Support*

Dan Hartnett  
*Chief Advocacy Officer for Legislative and Regulatory Affairs*

Stephanie Hayes Schlea  
*Director, Regulatory and Scientific Affairs*

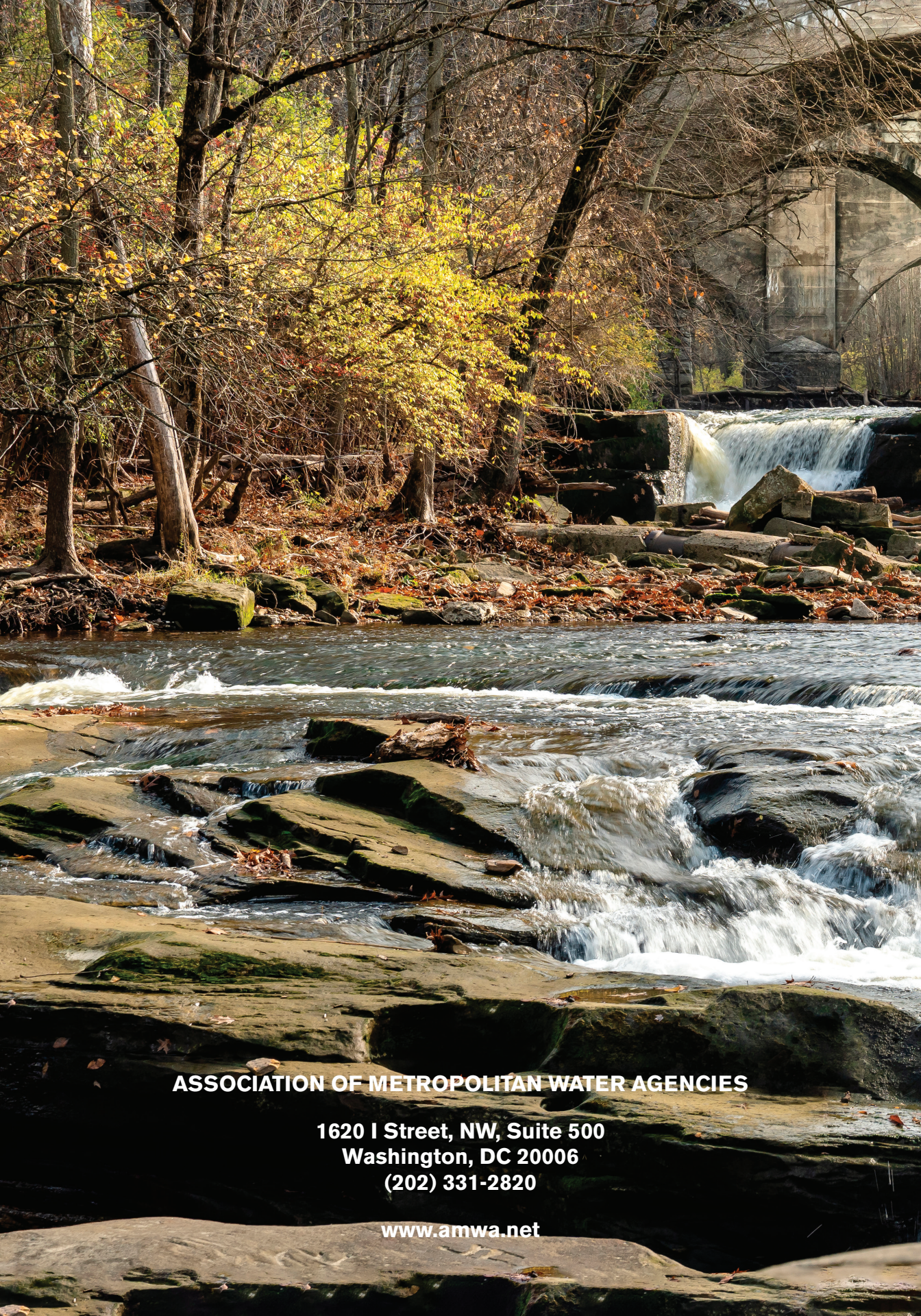
Mikko McFeely  
*Director, Resilience and Sustainability Affairs*

Carolyn Peterson  
*Chief Communications and Management Programs Officer*

Robert Saner  
*AMWA Counsel*



ASSOCIATION OF  
METROPOLITAN  
WATER AGENCIES



**ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN WATER AGENCIES**

**1620 I Street, NW, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20006  
(202) 331-2820**

**[www.amwa.net](http://www.amwa.net)**