President’s Corner
By Stacy Thompson, Saco WRRD

I am already two months into my term as President of Maine Water Environment, wondering where the time has gone! Really it means we are just around the corner from Spring. No one prepared me for the increase in emails that I would receive, but I am muddling my way through and even manage to answer some!

We recently held our legislative breakfast at the Senator Inn in Augusta and I really must applaud our government affairs chair Tim Haskell for all the time and effort he puts into this association... so thanks Tim! I tried to thank him at the breakfast, but he proceeded to walk out the door! It is truly amazing to see the dedication that is within the clean water, drinking water and storm water communities. Both the DEP commissioner Jerry Reid and the DHHS commissioner Jeanne Lambrew spoke and fielded questions from the audience. Both are extremely knowledgeable, and we look forward to working with them on such items as sustainable funding.

This year MEWEA is working hard to reach all corners of the state and broaden collaboration with Maine Water Utilities (MWUA) and the Joint Environmental Training Coordinating Committee (JETCC). We started by expanding our training sessions offered at the MWUA trade show held at the beginning of February. Next, in lieu of the Spring Conference for this year, we will be heading up to the Northern Maine Community College in Presque Isle to assist JETCC with training offerings and some coordinating efforts. This will be held April 24th and 25th. The Fall Convention will be September 11th-13th at Point Lookout.

If your facility would like to host an Executive meeting this year, please feel free to reach out to me at sthompson@sacomaine.org. We have one meeting in May that we are looking to have hosted by a facility, so let me know! Enjoy the rest of the snow that is to come and just think Spring!

Paula Drouin does a great job of keeping our website and social media platforms up-to-date. For a schedule of events and training sessions, visit: https://www.mewea.org/event-calendar/. If there is anything you would like to see, feel free to reach out to me!
**US EPA Takes Action on Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances**

By Mac Richardson, NEWEA

There are plenty of people working in wastewater treatment and protecting our environment that deserve praise and recognition for their work and commitment. I bet you know a few. Yet there are still many individuals with experience in our field who have not received the recognition they deserve.

On February 14th, the US EPA issued a statement outlining the agency’s plans for addressing the concerns surrounding environmental exposure to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) including two of significant potential impact, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS). EPA’s short- and long-term strategies include the following:

- Moving forward with the process of setting drinking water Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for PFOA and PFOS.
- Strengthening enforcement authority by designating PFOA and PFOS as hazardous substances and setting groundwater cleanup standards.
- Considering adding PFAS compounds to the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) and prohibiting the use of certain PFAS chemicals.
- Proposing additional PFAS monitoring in the next Unregulated Contaminants Monitoring Rule (UCMR) monitoring cycle.
- Expanding the scientific foundation for understanding and managing PFAS risks.
- Providing additional enforcement support and assistance to communities affected by PFAS exposure.
- Working collaboratively with other government agencies at all levels to develop an effective risk communication toolbox.

More detail can be found at [https://www.epa.gov/pfas/epas-pfas-action-plan](https://www.epa.gov/pfas/epas-pfas-action-plan).

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**Water Policy Fly-In**

By Mac Richardson, Maine State Director, NEWEA

Wednesday, April 3rd, marks the start of the National Water Policy Fly-In and Congressional Briefing in Washington, DC. This annual event is led by the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) and the Water Environment Federation (WEF). MEWEA will be sending a delegation of 4 to 5 representatives, including an elected official representing a community that has benefited from government funding for infrastructure improvements. While in DC, the MEWEA group will participate in Water Policy Briefings, Federal Agency Roundtables, and several networking opportunities with other water quality professionals. If you would like to learn more or would like to share an infrastructure story, you can go to [www.waterweek.us](http://www.waterweek.us) or you can contact me at: jeff.mcburnie@casella.com.
Have you joined the “Maine Water Professionals Discussion Forum” on Facebook?
Get your questions answered and help answer questions.
https://www.facebook.com/groups/778718278939822/

Don’t forget that MEWEA is happy to post current career opportunities on our webpage! Contact Paula Drouin at pdrouin@lawpca.org to get your job posted.

Maine Water Environment Association
Protecting Maine’s Water Resources

Current Positions Available

Portland 3/8/19: Maintenance Mechanic – Kemedy Sanitary Treatment District
Portland 3/9/19: Sanitary System Inspector – South Portland
Portland 3/9/19: Equipment/Power Operator – Tower Hill Water District
Portland 3/14/19: Director of Water Quality – Anola Water District
Portland 3/15/19: Maintenance Supervisor – Anola Water District
Portland 3/18/19: Water/Wastewater Operator – District of Metropolitan Senators
Portland 3/22/19: Chief Operator – Auburn/Brook
Portland 3/26/19: Environment Specialist I – MMS
Portland 3/26/19: Staff Part-Time Operator – MMS
Portland 3/27/19: Assistant Operator Maintenance – Biddeford
Houlton 3/29/19: Collection System Technician – Houlton

Here’s a listing of current opportunities. Go to https://www.mewea.org/about-maine-water-env-association-2/employment-opportunities/ for more information.

Two events recently got me thinking about the performance of wastewater treatment plants. The first was when our independent insurance agent called with concerns about the eight MEPDES permit exceedences (violations) we reported in 2018, and the second was a tour of Bates College students.

Taking the second item first, when conducting the tour we stepped into the lab where the day’s Imhoff cone was sitting in its cradle minding its own business when I picked it up and announced to the touring students, “This is our effluent for today—each day we take a sample and are required to have less than 0.3 ml per 1,000 ml (one liter) of solids settle out after one hour. When you come by, take a look. Personally, I think it is hard to even see that small a level in this Imhoff cone”. My impression was that the students found the requirement to be a pretty tough standard, and more rigorous than they might have expected.

The second event started when our insurance agent asked if we had experienced any permit violations in 2018. I replied that yes, in fact, we had reported eight (8) such exceedences/violations in 2018. A few days later the independent agent forwarded a request from one of the insurance companies from whom they were requesting a quote on our liability insurance. It said:

Can you describe in detail each violation? What have you done to correct each violation? We will require mitigation measures to be on file.

Are you under any compliance order from the health department or the state? If so, have you complied accordingly.

In response I sent copies of each incident report/explanation of violation report that we sent to the DEP, and indicated that we are not under any compliance order from the health department or the state.

I don’t mean to complain in any of this. We do our jobs and produce the best effluent we are able to each day. What I do want to suggest, however, is that there is some understanding of how well our facilities operate day in and day out, and the pretty tough standards that we are held to. I suppose what this also suggests is that we do need to reach out to our communities and let people know what we do and the standards to which we are held.

How are ya doin?
By Mac Richardson, LAWPCA

On March 1st, 2019, Sandy Perry and Ben Pearson represented the Maine Water Environmental Association at the New England Craft Brew Summit held in Portland. The summit is in its 4th year and attracts professionals working within and around the craft beer industry from around the Northeast and beyond. MEWEA was a vendor during the event which had several hundred participants and provided various information sheets regarding brewery wastewater, chemical management, and stormwater at breweries. The information was helpful to many folks who stopped by to see what MEWEA was all about. Beyond the fact sheets, several great conversations were had with brewers, distillers, and even a vineyard owner. Whether the owners discharge to a sanitary sewer collection system or utilize a septic tank, each person had a similar interest in how to better manage their wastewater.

While both types of systems have their pros and cons, it appeared that the users of septic systems were more interested in discussing their setups and the best way to approach wastewater. Many of these septic system users are located in rural areas and manage their wastewater differently than sewer system users. Though both septic and sewer users remarked that the fact sheets, particularly on chemical management, were helpful.

With the potential impact from high organic loadings on treatment plants, getting this information out and acting as a technical resource is a good idea. The Industrial Pretreatment Committee will continue to prepare more fact sheets to help provide information and also continue to work with Maine Brewers Guild to help educate brewers about what can be done in their daily operations to limit the impact. To get even more exposure, MEWEA should look to present some helpful topics at future events so that brewers can continue to see us as a resource.

Ben Pearson and Sandy Perry represented MEWEA at the New England Craft Brew Summit in Portland. The boom in the beer industry means it’s more important now than ever that we work with brewers to understand and manage their wastewater discharges. MEWEA was also an event sponsor.
The bill also provides that “coastal municipality” means a municipality by a coastal zone. This extends to all property the requirement that surface wastewater disposal systems be inspected prior to a sale of the property. Currently, that inspection requirement applies only to the sale of property located within a coastal shoreline area. Referred to the ENR Committee.

Status: Testified in favor. Tabled

LD 327 An Act to Revise Maine’s Environmental Laws, sponsored by Rep. Tucker. This concept draft, sponsored by ENR House Chair Tucker, is obviously a vehicle for whatever changes the Committee may decide are necessary as the session proceeds. Referred to the ENR Committee.

Status: No public hearing scheduled. Monitor.

LD 335 An Act to Require the State to Distribute 25 Percent of Adult Use Marijuana Retail and Excise Tax Revenue to Generating Municipalities. Has marine debris issues and stormwater issues, which we have testified in favor. Tabled.

Status: Public hearing on 2/19/19 @ 1:00. Monitor.

LD 199 An Act To Create the Water Resources Planning Committee, sponsored by Rep. Sylvester. Would create the Water Resources Planning Committee with the Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry to make recommendations on the use of water resources. Referred to Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry (ACF).

Status: No public hearing scheduled. Monitor.

LD 216 An Act To Protect Water Quality by Standardizing the Law Concerning Septic Inspection in the Shoreland Zone, sponsored by Rep. Fay. This bill amends the State’s growth planning and land use laws to reflect that addressing the effects of sea level rise is a state planning and regulatory goal. The bill amends the laws regarding the State’s coastal management policies to direct state, local and certain federal agencies responsible for regulating, planning, developing or managing coastal resources to conduct their activities affecting the coastal area consistent with the policy of encouraging the assessment of and planning for the effects of the rise in sea level. The bill provides that a coastal municipality or municipal region that includes a coastal municipality, if the municipality or region adopts a growth management program under the State’s growth planning and land use laws, may include in its comprehensive plan projections regarding sea level changes and the potential effects of the rise in sea level and may develop a coordinated plan for addressing the effects of the rise in sea level.

Status: Hearing scheduled for March 7, ENR. We should support. Referred to ENR Committee.

Status: No public hearing scheduled. Should testify in favor.

LD 590 An Act To Promote Climate Resiliency Measures To Protect Beaches and Near-shore Infrastructure, sponsored by Rep. Blume. This concept draft seeks to identify creative approaches to the regulation of shoreland development to protect beaches and near-shore critical infrastructure from sea level rise and storm damage. Referred to ENR Committee.

Status: Hearing scheduled 3/1 @ 10:00 am. Should testify in favor.

LD 774 An Act to Protect Maine Beaches and Shoreline.

Status: Hearing scheduled 3/1 @ 1:00 ENR.

Status: No hearing set yet.

LD 906 Act Regarding Coal Tar Paving Products. Same as prior year bill to ban use of coal tar-based pavement sealing products. Has marine debris issues and stormwater concerns. Referred to EUT.

Status: Hearing set for March 7, ENR. We should support.

Still waiting for more bills to be printed, only up to 999 right now.