

AWWA “Water Matters” Fly-in, Washington D.C. April 1 & 2, 2014

Report from Wisconsin Water Association Delegates

Jim Chaffee, AWWA President, AECOM Senior Consultant

Keith Donner, Director of Public Works & Utilities, Village of Weston

Jeff Pippenger, Utilities Administrator, City of Eau Claire

John Steinbrink, Director of Public Works, Village of Pleasant Prairie

This year the Wisconsin delegation had the honor of being accompanied by AWWA President Jim Chaffee to the event activities including congressional visits. Jim was/is very knowledgeable of AWWA’s legislative issues and this was very beneficial in our meetings with our Congressmen and staff members.

A copy of the agenda is provided for reference. In advance of the fly-in, Tommy Holmes, AWWA Legislative Director conducted a webinar to familiarize delegates with the fly-in, especially what to expect in meeting with congressmen and/or staff members. The webinar, and other correspondence forwarded in advance of the event included, explanation of the issues which delegates would be discussing with members of congress or their staff people during the event.

Tuesday morning prior to meeting with our congressional representatives, AWWA briefed all the delegates on 4 main issues – Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Authority (WIFIA), Water Infrastructure Finance Tools (State Revolving Loan Funds, Tax Exempt Municipal Bonds, and Private Activity Bonds), Chemical Spill Legislation, and Cyber Security. Copies of the issue papers have been provided as attachments. Delegates also received additional prepared “talking points” and the latest updates on progress of legislation from Tommy Holmes and Tom Curtis of AWWA.

Our delegation met with the following Congressional offices:

April 1

Tom Petri, Senior Legislative Assistant for Senator Ron Johnson; all Wisconsin delegates.

Ken Reidy, Policy Director for Senator Tammy Baldwin; John Steinbrink and Jim Chaffee

Congressman Sean Duffy, Wisconsin 7th District, and Legislative Assistant Bobby Hamill; Keith Donner, Jeff Pippenger, and Jim Chaffee

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April 2

Paul Bleiberg, Legislative Director for Congressman Reid Ribble, Wisconsin 8th District; Jim Chaffee and Keith Donner

Allison Steil, Legislative Director for Congressman Paul Ryan, Wisconsin 1st District; John Steinbrink and Jeff Pippenger

Catherine Johnson, Legislative Assistant for Congressman Tom Petri, Wisconsin 6th District; Jim Chaffee, Jeff Pippenger, and Keith Donner.

Congressman Ron Kind, Wisconsin 3rd District and Natalie Mamerow, Legislative Assistant, Jeff Pippenger, Jim Chaffee, and Keith Donner

At the April 2 breakfast we were treated to a presentation by Mike McGuire, author of The Chlorine Revolution. Mr. McGuire outlined the story of how water chlorination came to be implemented through the research and work of Dr. John Leal a New Jersey Public Health Officer. In the early 1900’s George Warren Fuller was retained to design and implement chlorination on a large scale for the 1st time in Jersey City, NJ, after a landmark legal case in which the judge’s ruling allowed the water utility serving Jersey City some discretion in how to make its water safe for Jersey City customers. Mr. McGuire reminded us how chlorination is considered the greatest public health advance of the millennium.

Perspectives/Takeaways

Washington, D.C. is a different world with respect to the business of our federal government. It is evident AWWA is just one of many organizations which coordinates events such as this to speak to congressmen and senators. Our elected representatives and their staff members have a huge task to stay informed about so many issues and their time is very precious.

Congressman Duffy invited us to stay in touch with his office throughout the year as issues come up.

Mr. Petri in Senator Johnson’s office indicated the Senator understands the value of our nation’s infrastructure.

We think these meetings are beneficial if not essential because other groups are out there doing as much, or more, to promote their issues. Our need to educate begins at home with customers, but we need to do what we can to make our legislators and their staff members aware of water and wastewater industry issues on state and national levels. This event gives us an avenue in the process of relationship building and provides our elected representatives and their staff members with contacts for questions about our issues. At the risk of sounding cliché, it is a marathon not a sprint.

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We were a bit unsure of the perception different representatives would have in meeting with delegates from outside their own districts. Each of the WWA delegates scheduled the meeting with the congressman representing their district. John Steinbrink arranged the meetings with our two senators. The meeting with Congressman Petri’s office was simply a drop-in meeting. Some state delegations made a point to visit every representative from their state. Drop-in meetings feel a bit awkward, but we should work on getting a letter from a WWA utility representative in each district in the future to schedule a meeting in advance, even if someone from those districts is not in attendance.

All delegates appreciated the opportunity to participate in this event. It obviously requires much planning and coordination on the part of AWWA staff.



American Water Works
Association

Agenda
2014 AWWA Water Matters! Fly-In
Washington Marriott at Metro Center; 775 12th St. NW

Monday, March 31

6-7 p.m. Early pickup of Fly-In materials
Board Room, Washington Marriott

Tuesday, April 1

7:30 a.m. Begin Check-In and Pick Up Fly-In Materials
Grand Ballroom ABC, Washington Marriott

8:30 a.m. Call to Order and Introductions
Aurel Arndt, Chair, Water Utility Council

8:45 a.m. Issue Presentations

9:45 a.m. State Delegations Meet to Prepare for Hill Visits

10:30 a.m. Questions and Final Steps

11 a.m. Participants Head to Capitol Hill!

Noon Working Lunch for those not on the Hill
Grand Ballroom DE

Afternoon Fly-In Delegates on the Hill
Capitol Hill

6-7:30 p.m. Water Matters! Reception
B369 Rayburn House Office Building

Wednesday, April 2

7:30 a.m. Breakfast Presentation
Mike McGuire, author [The Chlorine Revolution](#)
Grand Ballroom DE, Washington Marriott

8:30 a.m. Delegates on the Hill, *continued*
Capitol Hill

Noon Debriefing Luncheon
Grand Ballroom DE, Washington Marriott

1:30 p.m. Fly-In adjourns

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AWWA Fly-In Wisconsin Congressional Visit Evaluations

Office visited: Senator Ron Johnson

With whom did you meet (name & title): Tom Petri, Legislative Assistant

What was his/her reception of our issues? Initially, Tom seemed disengaged with the issue, but then really did get engaged in the subject. I cannot put a finger on the switching point, but once engaged he really was very interested, and had a great deal of knowledge on the subject areas. I would say he was very supportive of the issues of WIFIA, SRF, Tax Exempt Municipal Bonds, Chemical Spills legislation, and Cyber Security. Additionally, Tom did mention that Senator Johnson was very supportive, and understood the value and importance of our nation's infrastructure needs. We actually got to discuss longer than what our meeting was intended. I feel this was a very productive meeting. Prior to the meeting we met Senator Johnson's Outreach Director, Scott Bolstad from Eau Claire, who mentioned to say hello to our City Manager.

Your overall impression of the meeting: Positive

AWWA participants: Jim Chaffee, AWWA President; Keith Donner, Village of Weston, WI, John Steinbrink, Jr., Village of Pleasant Prairie, Jeff Pippenger, City of Eau Claire.

Office visited: Senator Tammy Baldwin, Wisconsin

With whom did you meet (name & title): Ken Reidy, Policy Director

What was his/her reception of our issues? He was polite, but appeared rushed and somewhat impatient. Total meeting lasted 10 minutes, and we touched on all the issues. Was very knowledgeable about all of the issues. He was definitely "seasoned." Claimed to have inside information on WIFIA and conference negotiations; would not share information.

Your overall impression of the meeting: Don't believe anything will come of the meeting. Reinforced awareness of AWWA. Listened and participated in the discussion.

Your overall impression of the meeting: Positive.

AWWA participants: Jim Chaffee, AWWA President; John Steinbrink, Village of Pleasant Prairie

Office visited: Congressman Paul Ryan, 1st District, Wisconsin

With whom did you meet (name & title): Allison Steil, Legislative Director. Expected to meet with the Congressman, as the meeting date/time was specifically designed. Mr Ryan was called into mark the 2015 budget and not available to meet.

What was his/her reception of our issues? She was polite and very receptive to the issues taking notes during the meeting. She was not aware of AWWA or the organizations history. We went over the "What is AWWA" sheet with her. Total meeting lasted 20 minutes, and we touched on all the issues. She was informed on basics of WIFIA, SRF, Chemical spill and Cyber Security. We received several canned statements identifying she understood the importance of this issue and would relay to Mr. Ryan.

Your overall impression of the meeting: Don't believe anything will come of the meeting. She now understands the role of AWWA.

AWWA participants: John Steinbrink, Village of Pleasant Prairie; Jeff Pippenger, City of Eau Claire, WI

Office visited: Congressman Ron Kind, 3rd District, Wisconsin

With whom did you meet (name & title): Congressman Ron Kind and Natalie Mamerow, Legislative Assistant

What was his/her reception of our issues? The Congressman was very interested in the impact of the long cold winter in Wisconsin, and its effect on the water systems. Additionally, he understands the importance of our aging infrastructure and the need to have funding in place, so we are able to reconstruct our underground utilities. The Congressman had to go after 10 minutes into the meeting, so his Legislative Assistant, Natalie Mamerow listened to the rest of the presentation. She was very engaging, and listened intently to our message. I feel this was a very productive meeting.

Your overall impression of the meeting: Positive.

AWWA participants: Jim Chaffee, AWWA President; Keith Donner, Village of Weston, Wisconsin, and Jeff Pippenger, City of Eau Claire.

Office visited: Congressman Thomas E. Petri, 6th District, Wisconsin

With whom did you meet (name & title): Catherine E Johnson, Legislative Assistant

What was his/her reception of our issues? Seemed very interested and engaged. Listened and participated in the discussion. Took extensive notes. She seemed to be less experienced and knowledgeable in her role – perhaps less “seasoned.” Showed some knowledge of the WIFIA provision. Asked if there was a “support letter” type campaign. We said yes, and she asked we follow up with more details about it. Agreed to make some inquiries with the conference committee contacts w/r to 49% criteria in the WRDA legislation

Your overall impression of the meeting: Positive.

AWWA participants: Jim Chaffee, AWWA President; Jeff Pippenger, City of Eau Claire, WI; Keith Donner, Town of Weston, Wisconsin

Office visited: Congressman Sean Duffy, Wisconsin 7th District

With whom did you meet (name & title): Congressman Duffy and Legislative Assistant, Robert (Bobby) Hamill

What was his/her reception of our issues? Mr. Hamill did not seem as engaged or informed about the issues and our meeting began with him. The congressman joined after about 10 minutes and he seemed to be informed about WIFIA and Cyber Security. The Congressman expressed a willingness to contact Congressman Shuster of Pennsylvania to support WIFIA. The Congressman expressed a view that cyber security could be resolved by having completely inaccessible computer and control systems. I think he understands our concerns with potentially restrictive legislation, but challenged us to prevent cyber-attacks and incidents in the absence of such legislation. He indicates if there is a security failure Congress would be expected to take action in response. The Congressman indicated he fields many questions about cyber security in meetings with constituents. There was some discussion about the cold winter and its effects on utilities back home. The Congressman urged us to keep him and his staff informed about issues on our plate throughout the year, rather than restricting our contact to an event such as the fly-in

Your overall impression of the meeting: Overall impression of the meeting was positive. The meeting began about 10 minutes late and was conducted in the hallway outside the office. Overall the meeting took about 30 minutes.

AWWA participants: Jim Chaffee, AWWA President; Jeff Pippenger, Utilities Administrator for the City of Eau Claire, WI; Keith Donner, Director of Public Works and Utilities for the Village of Weston, WI

Office visited: Congressman Reid Ribble, 8th District, Wisconsin

With whom did you meet (name & title): Paul E Bleiberg, Legislative Director. Expected to meet with the Congressman, as the meeting date/time was specifically designed to do that. We didn't ask, and Bleiberg didn't offer a reason for the change.

What was his/her reception of our issues? He was polite, but appeared rushed and somewhat impatient. Total meeting lasted 8 minutes, and we touched on all the issues. Appeared very knowledgeable (or presented that he was very knowledgeable) about all of the issues, and he probably was. He was definitely "seasoned." Claimed to have inside information on WIFIA and conference negotiations; would not share information but basically said "the 49% & Tax exempt bond issues should have been addressed long before this stage – its too late. Take what you get."

Your overall impression of the meeting: Don't believe anything will come of the meeting. Reinforced awareness of AWWA. This was a "check the box" event for Mr. Bleiberg.

AWWA participants: Jim Chaffee, AWWA President; Keith Donner, Village of Weston, WI