



**SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 995, SPRINGFIELD, MA 01101**

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Imagine a Day Without Water
October 12, 2017

**Springfield Water and Sewer Commission and Mayor Sarno
Ask the Region to Imagine a Day Without Water**

The Springfield Water and Sewer Commission (SWSC), Mayor Domenic Sarno, and industry and public safety leaders gathered at Cobble Mountain Reservoir in Granville on Thursday to urge the Springfield region to “Imagine a Day Without Water,” as part of an annual national campaign to bring more attention and awareness to the critical need for investment in water infrastructure.

The event was held at Springfield’s main water supply in Granville, which was built in the early 1930s and supplies 35-45 million gallons of treated drinking water to 250,000 customers in the Springfield region every day. SWSC Executive Director Joshua Schimmel noted that of the over 1,000 miles of water, sewer, and transmission pipe in the system, approximately 44% is over 75 years old, and 25% of it is over a century in age. “It would take \$600 million just to make all the necessary upgrades to our pipes, many of which are past the end of their useful life,” he said, noting that treatment plants, pump stations, and other associated infrastructure are also aging and in need of repair. Schimmel recognized the foresight of prior generations in building infrastructure like Cobble Mountain Reservoir that enabled Springfield to grow, and called on elected officials and the public to support the responsibility of utilities to protect that legacy through re-investment.



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Mayor Domenic Sarno commended the work of SWSC and declared that “Springfield has the best water in the country.” The high quality, affordability, and overall reliability of the city’s water makes it easy to take for granted, he said, but renewed investment will be needed to support the city’s future development. He called on elected officials at all levels of government to prioritize increased funding for water infrastructure.

Other speakers included Alex Dixon, General Manager of MGM Springfield, who noted that access to clean, reliable, and great-tasting water was so important to the casino project that it invested approximately \$5 million in upgrading water infrastructure around the site. Chris Aberg, Environmental Supervisor for Eastman-Solutia, commented that his company uses approximately 18% of all water treated from Cobble Mountain every year to produce glass resins and protective films that are shipped all over the world. “As a business that operates continuously throughout the year and employs roughly 400 highly skilled people in Springfield, we cannot afford to have one day without water,” Aberg said. Fire Commissioner Joseph Conant described the crisis that would ensue if firefighters could not depend on the availability or pressure required to fight fires. “At Springfield Fire Department we are constantly maintaining and updating our equipment so that we can save as many lives and as much property as possible,” he said. “Since water is a critical tool in any firefighter’s arsenal, why should we treat our water infrastructure any differently?”

Students from a robotics club at the Zanetti Montessori School in Springfield also provided remarks on what a day without water would mean to them, including an inability to brush their teeth or shower – but also a break from washing the dishes. The students are currently developing projects related to water conservation.

Imagine a Day Without Water is a national awareness event coordinated by the Value of Water Campaign. For more information visit: www.thevalueofwater.org. For information on SWSC, visit: www.waterandsewer.org.

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