



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

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Pipeline Program Interns Participate in “Western Mass Water Works Day”**

The Springfield Water and Sewer Commission (Commission) collaborated with the Western Mass Waterworks Association and Westfield Water Department to host Western Mass Water Works Day on July 10. The event brought together water utilities, industry professionals, and water sector partners to highlight the rewarding, stable, and long-lasting opportunities available across the region’s water and wastewater systems. Participating in the event were 12 Springfield high school student interns from the Commission’s Pipeline Program, a 7-week paid summer internship that exposes high school students to a variety of careers in the water sector and provides a pathway to future opportunities.

The event was organized in response to the opportunity posed by the wave of retirements and need for new water professionals in the region coinciding with many local students and residents seeking new careers that come with a sense of purpose. The day started at the Dry Bridge Road Water Treatment Plant in Westfield with a panel featuring early-career water sector professionals sharing their career pathway and the various opportunities for growth and advancement in the water sector. They also shared what they see as the future of water, particularly in a time of rapid technological and environmental change. Panelists included water treatment and distribution staff from Athol Department of Public Works, Westfield Water Department, and the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission.

“Across the Western Mass region, there is strong demand for licensed water professionals—and participants in the Pipeline Program are gaining the skills and exposure needed to step into many of these positions in the years ahead,” said Katie Shea, Educational Outreach Manager at the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission. “Events like this connects current regional water utilities with the potential talent being cultivated through our program, and help interns hear the perspectives of others just ahead of them that have recently found their calling in the water sector.”



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Following the panel the interns and other participants participated in facility tours of area water treatment plants including the Dry Bridge Road Water Treatment Plant in Westfield, Holyoke Water Works, and the Southampton Water Treatment Plant. The variety of facility tours showcased the wide range and scope of water treatment operations and career opportunities in Western Mass.

“We were proud to host Western Mass Water Works Day and showcase the state-of-the-art PFAS treatment at the Westfield Dry Bridge Road Water Treatment Plant,” said interim DPW Director Fran Cain. “Our plant really highlights the future of water treatment in our region for those interested in entering the water workforce.”

“Western Mass Waterworks Association is enthusiastic about attracting a new pool of talent to the many different types of water treatment found right here in Western Mass,” said WMWWA current president Anthony Fattorini. “This event was great to gather people together to start sharing their stories about what working in water is all about, so the pathway feels more achievable and personal connections can be made.”

### **The Pipeline Program**

With aging infrastructure, new technology, and a wave of retirements among water professionals, the water sector is seeking the next generation of skilled workers. Water sector careers not only offer competitive pay and benefits but also play an essential role in our community by protecting public health and the environment. To help meet this demand and build the water workforce of the future, the Commission launched the Pipeline Program in 2023 in partnership with Springfield Public Schools, Massachusetts Water Works Association (MWWA), and Veolia North America.

Pipeline Program interns rotate through various Commission departments and support staff on various hands-on activities and projects including Engineering, Watershed Protection, Wastewater Operations, Drinking Water Operations/Laboratory, Information Technology, Meters, and Water Quality. Interns also take the Massachusetts Water Works Association’s “How Water Works: An Introduction to the Drinking Water Industry.” This course is a first step as part of the education and training required to earn drinking water operator licenses in Massachusetts.

Interns also participate in enrichment activities, such as Western Mass Water Works Day, to learn more about career opportunities beyond the Commission. This includes careers in water operations at utilities and public works departments, along with related roles in fields like engineering, environmental science, information technology, the construction trades, and more.

For more information about careers in the water sector visit [waterandsewer.org/about-the-commission/careers/](https://waterandsewer.org/about-the-commission/careers/) or watch the Commission’s video “The Future is Water” on YouTube (@SpfldWaterSewer) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8VJesuZDfE>.



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More information on the Pipeline Program is available on the Commission's website  
[waterandsewer.org/pipeline-program](http://waterandsewer.org/pipeline-program).

**About the Commission**

Established in 1996, the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission is an independent, public regional utility. The Commission serves 250,000 customers in the lower Pioneer Valley with safe and reliable drinking water and wastewater service. The Commission provides retail drinking water service to Springfield and Ludlow; regional drinking water service to Agawam, Longmeadow, East Longmeadow, and Southwick; and emergency/peak service to Westfield, Southwick, West Springfield, Chicopee, and Wilbraham. The Commission provides retail wastewater service to Springfield and regional wastewater service to West Springfield, Agawam, Longmeadow, East Longmeadow, Wilbraham, and Ludlow.

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