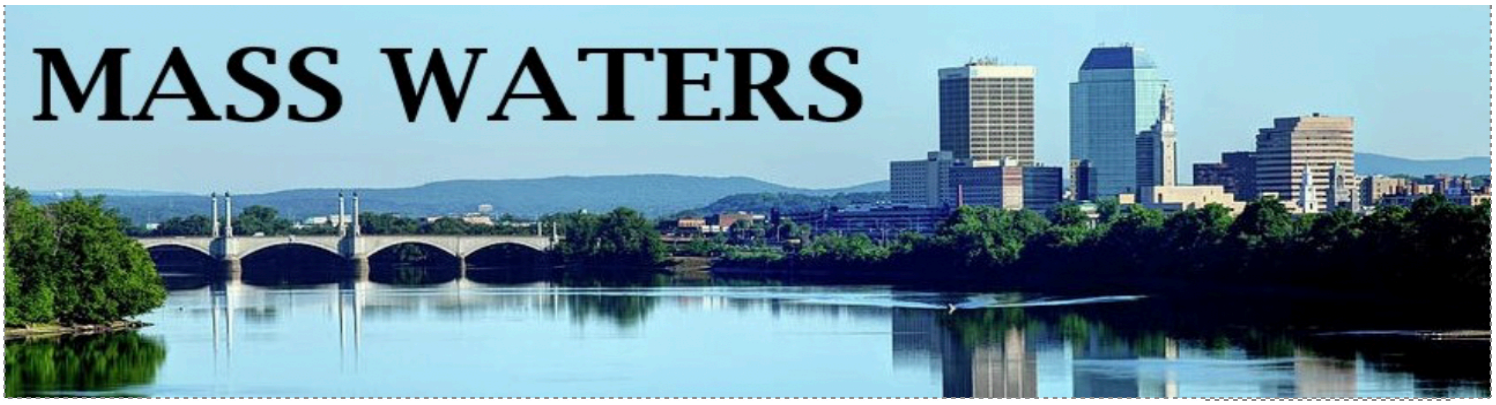
The Newsletter of the Massachusetts Water Environment Association



September Meeting Recap

By John Downey, MAWEA Board

We'd like to thank Leah Keating, Katherine Shea and Jaimye Bartak of the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission, along with Matt Nolen-Parkhouse and Kelly Olanyk of Veolia, for hosting a special quarterly meeting on September 10th.

The meeting included a facilities tour and presentation on their recent upgrade. The project focused on the secondary treatment system, designed to enhance nitrogen removal, ensuring compliance with new NPDES permit limits.

AECOM's Vaibhavi Shankar and Kevin Smith, with supporting remarks by Steven Fredericks, described the analysis of influent flows using data from SWSC and Veolia, which allowed for the reduction in the number of mixed liquor return (MLR) pumps needed per aeration basin while still achieving superior nitrogen removal.

Hach's Trina Picardi and Angel Perez, joined remotely by Micki Repansky, discussed their system of both an open and closed loop controllers to adjust DO concentration in real time through continuous measurement of ammonia load, which led to

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PLEASE VISIT AND SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS:

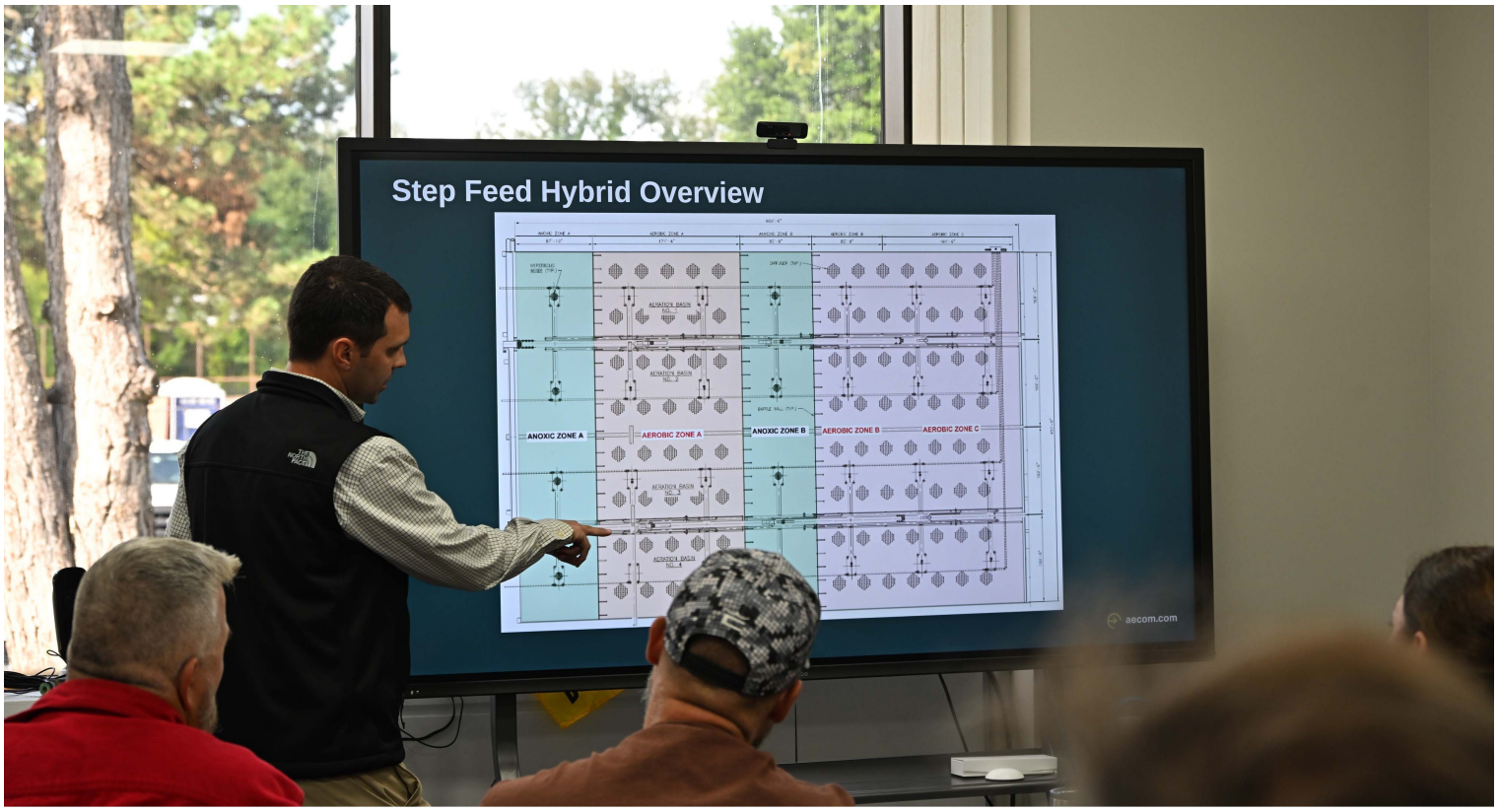
September Meeting Recap Cont. from Page 1

significant cost savings.

Springfield's massive aeration basins, each 600 feet long and 100 feet wide, also underwent upgrades, including the addition of baffle walls to create distinct treatment zones, installation of mixers in anoxic zones, and replacement of aging ceramic diffusers with modern EPDM diffusers.

The project highlights the value of employing ammonia based aeration control strategies to reduce the treatment footprint while improving process performance.

Thanks also to MAWEA's Denise Descheneau and Mickey Nowak for emceeing and technical remarks, and, as always, to Charlie Tyler for capturing the event on film.




Aeration System Upgrade with
Ammonia Based DO Control System
Presentation & Tour
HACH


Aeration Upgrades

NEIWPCC Learning Opportunities

By Daphne Short, NEIWPCC

NEIWPCC Learning Opportunities – NEIWPCC's wastewater operator courses focus on training for those new to the field, preparing to take a licensing exam, and continuing education for experienced operators. Our Massachusetts Wastewater Operator Training program classes cover municipal and industrial wastewater, collection systems, pumps, and laboratory skills for exam preparation. We are a third of the way through our Fall 2025 semester and still have plenty of live-virtual training opportunities in the coming months. We continue to offer online self-paced courses on Wet Weather Operations and Wastewater Ethics. For more information on self-paced, in-person, or live virtual classes, please see NEIWPCC's registration and Training Calendar at **https://payments.neiwpcc.org/**.

Operator Certification Exams –

All Massachusetts Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator (WWTPO) exams are administered through PSI/AMP. Before scheduling your exam:

- Review PSI's handbook (**https://bit.ly/4gGcG9r**) and scheduling procedures (**https://bit.ly/maww-scheduling**).
- Explore PSI's resource page for practice exams, educational books, and training materials: **https://www.psionlinestore.com/**.

Additional Training & Resources

- **WaterOperator.org** – Free webinars, training materials, and a calendar of local training events.
- US EPA's SCOWT – A searchable clearinghouse of wastewater technologies to keep professionals up to date (**https://ordspub.epa.gov/ords/wfc/f?p=259:1::::::**).

Stay informed and set yourself up for success!

Operator Renewals – The renewal cycle ends on December 31, 2025—don't wait until the last minute! Start earning your 20 Training Contact Hours (TCHs) today.

MAWEA members automatically receive 2 TCHs just for being members and can earn additional hours by attending quarterly meetings.

For details on renewal requirements, visit: **https://bit.ly/neiwpcc-renewals**.

NEIWPCC offers an online searchable database of wastewater operators along with other resources for Massachusetts wastewater professionals (**https://bit.ly/3YUJJku**).

For questions about certification or renewal, please email Michelle Jenkins at mjenkins@neiwpcc.org.

For more information or questions about NEIWPCC or the MWOT program, please contact us at training@neiwpcc.org or (978) 323-7929.

Meet MAWEA's New Board Member!

By Daphne Short, NEIWPCC

Hello everyone! My name is Daphne Short. I am new to the wastewater field with a little over a year of experience on the wastewater training side at NEIWPCC. Originally from southwest Texas, I have a degree in Environmental Science with a concentration in Geology from the University of Texas at El Paso. I have experience working with children in various capacities from outdoor education with the National Park Service to traditional classroom math with elementary students.

I randomly applied for a youth education internship with NEIWPCC for the summer of 2023, not expecting anything to come out of it. After landing the role, I spent a wonderful summer teaching students about wastewater at the Lowell Regional Wastewater Utility. I came back to do the same internship in 2024 and started a full-time role as an Environmental Analyst in the Fall of 2024. Now I support our Wastewater and On-Site Programs Division, mainly focusing on wastewater operator training and supporting workforce development programs. It has been great learning about the wastewater industry and meeting the operators that keep water clean.

2025 Operator Exchange - MA to NH

By Ethan Cox, Upper Blackstone Clean Water

I have worked in the clean water field for four years, starting as an operator and later moving to the engineering department. I have only ever worked at Upper Blackstone, so I was excited to be selected for the 2025 Operator Exchange.

Over three days, I toured five facilities across New Hampshire. At each one, I encountered a treatment method or technology I was unfamiliar with. The 2nd Director of the New Hampshire Water Pollution Control Association (NHWPCA), Phil Boisvert, accompanied me during and between tours. Touring in a small group gave me the opportunity to ask all my questions and the time to talk through the answers.

At Peirce Island in Portsmouth, I was introduced to chemically enhanced primary treatment and biologically aerated filtration (BAF). I was surprised to see a treatment plant so close to the public, with a jogging trail around its perimeter and a public pool just down the road, but Peirce Island handled odors without issue and kept a clean appearance.

In Dover, I got to see the excavation for a new final settling tank. Unlike other facilities I have seen, Dover has covers over primary settling tanks and bioreactors to help handle odors. They also benefited the local community by accepting street sweepings and reclaiming sand for reuse.

The Hooksett facility made efficient use of their small footprint. Their influent snaked through headworks, allowing them to put screenings from two bar racks in series onto one conveyor belt. It was also my first time seeing a process without distinct primary and secondary treatment. Their unique integrated fixed-film activated sludge (IFAS) system is made possible by their comprehensive screening at headworks.

The Manchester WWTP is similar in size to Upper Blackstone, able to fully treat 42 MGD. My facility and Manchester both incinerate sludge, so I had many questions about their fluidized bed incinerator (FBI). At my request, we spent the majority of the tour discussing their dewatering and incineration process.

Pictured left to right: Phillip Boisvert, Ethan Cox, and John Clark.

On the final day, I toured the Peterborough WWTP with dozens of New Hampshire operators as part of the NHWPCA fall meeting. Peterborough makes use of sequencing batch reactors (SBRs) to achieve all post-screening treatment in one of two large tanks. Two things that stood out to me were that sludge only leaves the tank when it is wasted and all the SBR parts can be pulled out and maintained without draining the tank- even the aeration system!

Later I sat in the NHWPCA board meeting, where I got just a small preview of the hard work and coordination necessary to keep the regional association going strong. Finally, I socialized with operators from around New Hampshire over lunch.

My thanks to NHWPCA for the opportunity to tour these facilities and learn so much. Special thanks to Phil Boisvert who guided me between tours. It was a pleasure being part of this year's Operator Exchange.

Legislative Advocacy

By Mickey Nowak, MAWEA Government Affairs Committee Chair

MAWEA Government Affairs Committee Chair Mickey Nowak prepared the remarks below to explain to our state representatives and senators the realities of biosolids management for our communities and the impact that bills H.2450 and S.1504 will have, if enacted. These remarks were submitted in advance of the public hearing on these bills, which was held September 10.

Re: H.2450 and S.1504 An Act to protect Massachusetts public health from PFAS

Thank you for this opportunity to testify about H.2450 and S.1504 An Act to protect Massachusetts public health from PFAS. The Massachusetts Water Environment Association (MAWEA) represents wastewater facility operators and the wastewater community in Massachusetts.

• Massachusetts wastewater utilities are facing significant challenges associated with per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), including the erroneous perception that public clean water utilities are producers of PFAS. Clean water facilities are instead the passive receivers of PFAS.

• Wastewater utilities will bear considerable costs and potential liabilities for a contaminant for which they should not be held responsible.

• Massachusetts wastewater utilities are public health and environmental stewards that have invested billions of dollars to comply with stringent regulations to greatly improve Massachusetts water quality.

• Massachusetts currently produces 166,000 dry tons of municipal biosolids – the organic matter recycled from sewage. Currently 39% of Massachusetts biosolids are land applied. 55% of Massachusetts biosolids are exported out of state. The market for Massachusetts and regional biosolids management and disposal is at capacity.

While MAWEA supports many sections of the Bill, such as the PFAS Remediation Trust fund, source reduction, and PFAS awareness, there are portions of H.2450 and S.1504 that are of major concern to the wastewater community.

Lines 128 to 129 of the Bill

128 (c) The department of environmental protection shall include effluent limitations and

129 treatment requirements for PFAS in groundwater discharge permits upon renewal.

While we believe the Bill is most concerned with industrial discharges, of the 366 Ground Water Discharge (GWD) Permits in the State, 13 are issued to Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTW). Those facilities are listed in the following table with their design flows in millions of gallons per day (MGD):

Facility	Design Flow (MGD)
Devens Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP)	8.1
Barnstable WWTP	4.2
Nantucket Wastewater System	4
Chatham Water Pollution Control Facility	2.3
Falmouth WWTP	1.2
Edgartown WWTP	0.75
Kingston WWTP	0.725
Provincetown Public Works	0.65
Oak Bluffs WWTP	0.37
Acton Wastewater Collection	0.299
Tisbury Public Works	0.104
Otis Department of Public Works	0.03
Ashfield	0.025

Publicly owned clean water utilities are "passive receivers" of PFAS, since the clean water treatment facilities do not produce or manufacture PFAS but, de facto, "receive" these chemicals through the raw influent that arrives at each clean water treatment facility. This influent can come from domestic, industrial, and commercial sources and may contain PFAS constituents ranging from trace levels to

higher concentrations, depending on the nature of the dischargers to the sewer system.

Municipal clean water utilities were not designed with PFAS treatment capabilities. Today, there are no cost-effective techniques available to treat or remove PFAS from the sheer volumes of wastewater managed daily by clean water facilities.

MAWEA is proposing that POTWs with groundwater discharge permits receive Test-Report-Optimize permits rather than numerical limits for PFAS in effluent discharges.

Lines 130 to 137 of the Bill

130 SECTION 3. The department of environmental protection shall promulgate regulations to

131 implement a schedule for phasing out the use, sale, or distribution, or offer for use, sale, or

132 distribution of sludge without the department's site-specific approval in the commonwealth, and

133 shall not include the disposal or placement of sludge at a solid waste landfill, hazardous waste

134 landfill or sludge landfill. For the purposes of this section, "sludge" shall mean the solid, semi

135 solid, and liquid residue that results from a process of wastewater treatment or drinking water

136 treatment, and does not include grit, screening, or grease and oil removed at the headworks of a

137 wastewater or drinking water facility

This portion of the Bill eliminates Type I biosolids under the MassDEP Acceptance of Suitability permitting program for the land application of biosolids (under 310 CMR 32.00) and the landfilling of biosolids.

In 2023 Massachusetts produced 166,000 dry US tons of biosolids. Of that total, 39% of biosolids are land applied. 79% of those land applied biosolids are classified as Type I. The vast majority of those biosolids are very unlikely to find alternative sites if reclassified as Type II or Type III biosolids. As an example, Massachusetts facilities send 10,000 dry US tons of biosolids to the Hawk Ridge Compost Facility in Maine. After composting, 75% of those biosolids are returned to Massachusetts for land Application. 100% of those biosolids returned to Massachusetts are Type I biosolids. Another example is that of the Greater Lawrence Sanitary District (GLSD). 3,600 dry US tons of GLSD's biosolids are land applied in Massachusetts. 100% of those 3,600 dry US tons biosolids are Type I. There are more than 20 facilities that use land application for all or part of their biosolids management practice. If land application is prohibited, where will those biosolids go? Landfills in Massachusetts do not have the capacity to accept them; incineration facilities in the region are at capacity; therefore, these biosolids will have to be trucked or trained away out of state. To also eliminate the landfilling of biosolids adds to the disposal problem. Currently 19 Massachusetts wastewater facilities depend on landfilling all or part of their biosolids. Already at present, approximately 55% percent of biosolids are shipped out of state. How far away and at what cost will Massachusetts find additional disposal sites? How long will out of state facilities continue to accept our biosolids? Disposal costs, that have already increased significantly in recent years, will skyrocket and local rate payers will be burdened with those costs.

The MassDEP has recently started work on the PFAS and Residuals Technology and Management Study. Part 1 of the study – Current and Near-Term Management of Massachusetts Wastewater Sludge – is available online at https://www.mass.gov/doc/pfas-and-residuals-technology-and-management-study-part-1-technical-memorandum/download. MAWEA strongly advises that all committee members read Part 1 to see the dire state of biosolids disposal in Massachusetts. MAWEA proposes that the present system Approval of Suitability (AOS) permitting be allowed to stay in place allowing for current Type I biosolids management practices until a Massachusetts Biosolids Master Plan is completed. MAWEA recommends that, when completed, the Biosolids Master Plan adopt a PFAS

Legislative Advocacy Cont. on Page 10

concentration-based approach with consideration of exposure risk for determining the best option(s) for reuse or disposal of wastewater biosolids. Identification of options for managing biosolids needs to be factored into any policy changes by the legislature and regulators to ensure that Massachusetts has a realistic solution for the product of its daily flush. MAWEA strongly believes the present noted language in H.2450 and S.1504 will be cost-prohibitive for municipalities and that its underlying premise is not science-based. We respectfully ask that this Bill not be allowed to move forward in its current form.

The Massachusetts Water Environment Association (MAWEA) is available as a technical resource, and we appreciate the opportunity to be heard. Should you have any questions, please contact us at info@mawea.org .

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on H.2450 and S.1504.

Sincerely,

mawea.org

We urge you to contact your representative and senator today, those representing where you work and those representing where you live (the ones you vote for) and share these realities with them, so that they can better support us and the communities we serve.

Mickey has done his part- now it is time to do ours.

The following pages contain the names and email addresses of all the representatives (for H.2450) and senators (S.1504) sponsoring these bills.

1. Find the representative and senator you vote for on the following pages

2. Copy and paste the following message into an email to them both. It contains a hyperlink to Mickey's testimony

3. Email them

Legislators and their staff read the emails from the people who can vote for them- that's you. So use the tool of your voices collectively, you will be heard.

Dear Representative and Senator,

I am writing in support of the written testimony submitted on my behalf and the behalf of MAWEA, the state wastewater operators' association.

I ask you to consider the concerns we have for the legislation you are sponsoring, bills H2450 and S1504. These bills take away treatment tools, drive up costs, and do not solve the problems our communities face. Please review that testimony, attached here: **https://bit.ly/43xa2iP**

Thank you for helping me provide a safe environment and affordable water rates to your constituents.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Your Town

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Registration is Now Open for NEWEA's Annual Conference

The NEWEA Annual Conference is happening at the Boston Marriott Copley Place from January 25-28. With 37 technical sessions, over 200 exhibit booths, student poster displays, and more, there are lots of opportunities to learn, network, and earn Training Contact Hours (TCHs).

Tuesday, January 27 is Operator's Day! Attending Operator's Day allows individuals to:

- Visit 200+ vendor displays
- Attend morning and afternoon Plant Operations technical sessions
- Earn Training Contact Hours (TCHs)
- Enjoy a free continental breakfast and luncheon buffet at the Operator's Reception

To learn more about the Annual Conference, view the Preliminary Program: https://www.newea.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/AC26_PreliminaryProgram.pdf

To register, visit the following link: https://2026-annual-conference-exhibit.events.newea.org/