I have always had great appreciation for our Florida Section American Water Works Association (FSAWWA) Water Utility Council (WUC) and volunteers, and events over the past couple of years have highlighted the importance of our WUC.

**Actions of State and National Utility Councils**

Starting over two years ago, in March 2020, during the beginning of the pandemic and to this day, the FSAWWA WUC and the Florida Water Environment Association (FWEA) Utility Council have conducted open conference calls with all of our statewide water and wastewater utility professionals to discuss various operations topics, such as managing the utility workforce during the early stages of the pandemic and the availability of chemicals for treatment processes, which are still of concern today with our supply chain challenges.

Additionally, statewide, our WUC, in coordination with AWWA’s WUC, develops policies to be advocated to the Florida Legislature and regulatory agencies. The WUC Legislative Committee conducts conference calls during Florida’s legislative sessions to discuss proposed legislation and possible impacts to utilities.

**Water Matters! Fly-In**

Nationally, our AWWA WUC is highly engaged and recently hosted the annual Water Matters! Fly-In, held in Washington, D.C., on April 27 and 28.

The first AWWA Fly-In was held in the spring of 2002 with the purpose of advancing AWWA’s legislative issues on Capitol Hill utilizing the grassroots power of AWWA by meeting with members of Congress and their staffs to discuss pressing water issues. The Fly-In has helped establish, with these congressional members, our AWWA water professionals as authoritative sources of knowledge and expertise on drinking water issues.

Approximately 140 AWWA delegates from across the United States attended this year’s Fly-In to meet with their respective members of Congress and their staff members.

The three focused talking points this year were:

- Infrastructure funding (bipartisan infrastructure law appropriations)
- Cybersecurity
- Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) liability exemption

The Florida Section was well represented by members of our FSAWWA WUC and we met in person with more than 13 congressional members and/or their staffs.

**Water Week 2022: April 24-30**

The Fly-In was held in conjunction with Water Week 2022, which is held annually in the spring. Water Week encourages the advancement of key water policy priorities, such as increasing federal infrastructure investment, addressing water affordability, supporting water research and development, and making critical infrastructure more resilient.

Water Week 2022 was supported by AWWA and 19 partners, including the following:

- American Membrane Technology Association (AMTA)
- Water Environment Federation (WEF)
- WateReuse
- Association of Clean Water Administrators (ACWA)
- Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA)
- American Public Works Association (APWA)
The 19 organizations intersected at the Water Week reception on April 27, which provided a great opportunity to network with other like-minded professionals passionate about all things water.

AWWA Drinking Water Week 2022

The AWWA and its members recognized and celebrated Drinking Water Week from May 1-7, 2022. The week provides a unique opportunity for both water professionals and the communities we serve to recognize the vital role water plays in our daily lives.

Drinking Water Week was brought by AWWA to the attention of the U.S. Government in 1988, which formed a coalition, along with the League of Women Voters, the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Rep. Robert Roe and Sen. Dennis DeConcini subsequently sponsored a resolution to name the first week of May each year as Drinking Water Week, and the week-long observance was declared in a joint congressional resolution signed by then-president Ronald Reagan.

Downloadable materials are available from AWWA on its website, including logos, social media posts, proclamations, radio public service announcements (PSAs), press releases, and children's activities, including an artwork contest. All of these can assist with your organization's drinking water celebration in the future.

Your Voice

Local and national opportunities abound for water utilities and associates to make a difference in water policy and in celebrating drinking water. I encourage your participation in these outreach opportunities—your voice has impact and Water Matters!