

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1280

(Montgomery County Delegation and Prince George's
County Delegation)

Appropriations

Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission - Collective Bargaining - Technical
Unit
MC/PG 114-19

This bill expands the number of collective bargaining units at the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) by establishing two separate collective bargaining units (office *and* technical) from the current joint “office/technical” unit. The technical bargaining unit includes technical classification titles in which employees have a combination of basic scientific or technical knowledge and manual skill that is usually acquired through specialized postsecondary school education or through equivalent on-the-job training.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: None. The bill does not materially affect WSSC operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: There are four collective bargaining units at WSSC: (1) an office/technical unit; (2) a professional unit; (3) a service, labor, and trade unit; and (4) a law enforcement unit.

The office/technical unit is made up of four different types of classification titles: (1) office classification titles in which employees are responsible for internal and external communications, recording and retrieving information, and paperwork required in an office; (2) technical classification titles in which employees have a combination of basic scientific or technical knowledge and manual skill that is usually acquired through specialized postsecondary school education or through equivalent on-the-job training; (3) paraprofessional classification titles in which employees perform in a supportive role, some of the duties of a professional or a technician but that usually require less formal training or experience than those duties performed by those with professional or technical status; and (4) all other nonprofessional job titles currently unrepresented by any other union.

The professional unit is made up of professional classification titles in which employees have special or theoretical knowledge that is usually acquired through college training or other training that provides comparable knowledge or work experience.

The service, labor, and trade unit includes classification titles in which employees perform service and maintenance, may operate specialized machinery or heavy equipment, and have duties that contribute to the comfort and convenience of the public or to upkeep and care of WSSC buildings, facilities, or grounds. Additionally, this unit includes classification titles in which employees are required to have a special manual skill and thorough knowledge of processes that are required through on-the-job training, experience, apprenticeship, or other formal training programs. Finally, the service, labor, and trade unit consists of classification titles included in the service, labor, and trade bargaining unit as constituted on January 1, 2003.

The law enforcement unit includes WSSC police officers.

Background: WSSC indicates that 1,152 employees are currently members of a collective bargaining unit as shown in **Exhibit 1**. Of these employees, 452 are members of the office/technical unit. Pursuant to the bill, 220 employees will become members of the newly created technical unit and 232 employees will remain members of the office unit.

Exhibit 1
Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission Collective Bargaining Units
Number of Employees

<u>Bargaining Unit</u>	<u>Employees</u>
Office/Technical	452
Professional	238
Service, Labor, and Trade	437
Law Enforcement	25
Total	1,152

Source: Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission

WSSC is among the largest water and wastewater utilities in the country, providing water and sewer services to 1.8 million residents in Montgomery and Prince George's counties. It has approximately 475,000 customer accounts, serves an area of approximately 1,000 square miles, and currently employs more than 1,500 people. The commission operates three reservoirs, two water filtration plants, and six wastewater treatment plants. The six wastewater treatment facilities, as well as the Blue Plains Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant, handle more than 200 million gallons of wastewater per day. The commission maintains more than 5,700 miles of water main lines and over 5,500 miles of sewer main lines.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Montgomery County; Prince George's County; Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission; Department of Legislative Services

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