



## H.R. 5778 – DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY INDEPENDENCE PRESERVATION ACT

---

### FLOOR SITUATION

H.R. 5778 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) on April 10, 2008. The resolution was referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, but was never considered.

H.R. 5778 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on June 9, 2008.

---

### SUMMARY

H.R. 5778 amends the District of Columbia Home Rule Act (P.L. 93-198) to clarify that the Chief Financial Officer of the District of Columbia does not have authority over the D.C. Water and Sewer Authority (WASA) or its personnel.

Additionally, the bill codifies in federal law that WASA is financially independent from the jurisdiction of the D.C. Chief Financial Officer. H.R. 5778 requires the financial and general management of WASA to be the exclusive responsibility of WASA's Board of Directors. This codification changes current federal law, which states that WASA's finances are under the authority of the D.C. Chief Financial Officer.

---

### BACKGROUND

In 1996, the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority (WASA) was created as a regional entity by the Water and Sewer Authority Establishment and Department of Public Works Act of 1996 (D.C. Law 11-111). WASA serves Washington, D.C. and portions of Montgomery County and Prince George's County, Maryland, as well as Fairfax County and Loudoun County, Virginia. WASA is funded by ratepayers living in D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. The Authority is governed by a six member Board of Directors.

Under current federal law, WASA's finances are under the jurisdiction of the D.C. Chief Financial Officer. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been in place between WASA and the D.C. Chief Financial Officer for several years stating that the CFO would not exercise its authority over WASA. However, it was recently determined that such a memorandum was not legally enforceable and as such, federal law needed to be changed in order to make this MOU relevant. H.R. 5778 codifies in federal statute that the Water and Sewer Authority is financially independent from the District of Columbia.

[District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority website](#)

---

### COST

The Congressional Budget Office did not have a cost estimate available for H.R. 5778 as of June 6, 2008.

---

### STAFF CONTACT

For questions or further information contact Justin Hanson at (202) 226-2302.