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AUDITOR GENERAL

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Auditor General DePasquale Responds to Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County Criticism of Additional Transparency

HARRISBURG – Auditor General Eugene DePasquale today released the following statement after the Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County (MAWC) criticized proposed legislation (Senate Bill 597) that would give the auditor general the power to audit municipal authorities:

“Despite what the Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County asserts, a state audit will not have what they term ‘a chilling effect’ on their services. More likely, the effect would be quite the opposite.

“The rate-paying public has a right to know how the Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County is spending money, especially when the board this week raised water rates 7 percent for a total rate hike of 39 percent in just three years. The lack of state review of authorities that manage billions of dollars, and provide critical services such as water supply, does a great disservice to Westmoreland County residents and Pennsylvanians in general.

“The last authority that initially said it didn’t need a state audit was the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority. Once the board responded to public pressure and allowed my team in, we uncovered wide-ranging problems that led to dramatic reforms. This is proof that a state audit would not be duplicative of the work of independent auditors that authorities currently hire, and that my audits drive positive changes and improve transparency.

“As I have said before, once SB 597 becomes law, my auditors will be on the steps of the Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County ready to launch a full, fair and independent review to ensure that ratepayers are getting the service they deserve.”

[Senate Bill 597](#), sponsored by Sen. Pat Stefano and co-sponsored by Sen. Kim Ward would allow the Department of the Auditor General to audit municipal authorities, closing a major gap in accountability and transparency in municipal water, parking and sewer authorities.

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