

AMSA: 1970-80
The Story of its First Decade

The Association of Metropolitan Sewerage Agencies
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Association of Metropolitan Sewerage Agencies

Preface

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The growth of the Association of Metropolitan Sewerage Agencies over the last ten years is nothing short of remarkable. Beginning as a small group of men concerned only about federal funding of sewage treatment plants, the association has grown to include 76 major metropolitan sewerage agencies that are involved with every facet of water pollution control.

The organization has become well-respected over the years by supplying expert, reliable information to the government's key decision-makers. Now members of Congress and the Administration often come to AMSA for advice.

AMSA built up this good reputation by always keeping its members on top of the latest government developments, as well as the latest technical developments in the field, through its many newsletters, technical and legislative bulletins, and both regional and national conferences.

A good deal of the association's success must be attributed to the character of the men who have shaped its course. Although differing widely in personality, they have always been able to join together, with a one-for-all-and-all-for-one spirit, to work toward common goals. And despite differences of opinion, many lasting friendships have been formed.

No account of the association would be complete without acknowledging the debt to Tom Gibbs, who served originally as chairman of the Steering Committee and then as the first AMSA president. Nor could the association have survived and grown without the cooperation of the Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle, which allowed not only Gibbs, but also James Ellis and, later, Preston Tack of its staff to devote enormous amounts of time to AMSA's affairs. We also should acknowledge Lee White, who has served as AMSA's counsel since its inception. And in no way may we overlook the contributions of my predecessors as president, Chuck Kaiser, Fred Harper, and Bart Lynam. Finally, I must highly commend Ron Linton and the Washington staff of AMSA, without whose dedication and expertise this association would cease to exist.

How far AMSA has come in its first ten years was clearly evident at the last membership meeting, in October 1979. Members adopted resolutions and policy statements on topics ranging from national clean water goals, full funding, and sludge management, to pretreatment, AWT, combined sewer overflow, and marine discharges. Some of the issues have been under consideration by AMSA and the federal government for

a long time, while others have come up more recently. Ironically, the issue that originally triggered AMSA's formation — the funding of metropolitan wastewater treatment plant construction — is one of AMSA's prime concerns as it enters its second decade.

I am cautiously optimistic, however. I do not foresee a time when all our problems will be solved, nor do I believe that all decisions made by the government will be ones supported by AMSA. But I do believe the association is a strong and influential force that will continue to work for sensible solutions and in many instances prevail.

AMSA's First Decade

In the late 1960s, Charles V. Gibbs, executive director of the Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle and responsible for water pollution control for the Seattle area, was confronted with a difficult task. He had to respond to uncertain and sometimes conflicting federal directives for water cleanup coming from Congress and the Administration, and do so with little or no federal grant assistance.

The distribution of funding under the existing national water pollution control programs was one of the things most troubling to Gibbs and other agency managers. Grants available from the Federal Water Pollution Control Administration, authorized by the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1956, went mainly to small agencies serving few people. In order to conform with the requirements of the law, large metropolitan sewerage agencies had to use mostly local funds for building or improving their facilities. Then, in 1969, Congress began considering a bill that would provide substantial construction grants to sewerage agencies for future facilities and little or nothing to those that already had used their own funds for this purpose.

Charles Gibbs, known to his associates as Tom, was one of the men who considered both the current and pending federal legislation unjust to the larger sewerage agencies. Assisted by James R. Ellis, chief counsel of the Seattle agency, Gibbs made repeated efforts — by letter, telephone calls, and visits to people on Capitol Hill — to give legislators a better understanding of the special needs and problems of the large metropolitan sewerage agencies. Not succeeding by early 1969, he began to wonder if other metropolitan agencies were having similar problems. Perhaps if men from a number of these agencies could speak to Congress with one voice, they might be heard.

The First Meetings

Inquiries revealed that indeed other agencies were having trouble obtaining appropriate audiences in Washington and would like to met to discuss ways to be heard. Accordingly, representatives of 15 sewerage authorities met on September 15 and 16, 1969. Senator Warren Magnuson of Washington arranged for them to use the Senate Commerce Committee hearing room in the New Senate Office Building.

The people who attended and the agencies they represented were: V.W. Bacon of the Metropolitan Sanitary District of Greater Chicago; John A. Crowley of the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati; Lawrence M. Politzer of the City of Cleveland; James F. Wright of

the Delaware River Basin Commission; Henry J. Graeser of the City of Dallas; Glen J. Hopkins of the City of Kansas City, Mo.; H.M. Adams, A.J. Popowski, Sol Seid and Ed Johnson of the Middlesex County (NJ) Sewerage Authority; Ariel Thomas of Metcalf and Eddy, which represented the Middlesex County Sewerage Authority and the Allegheny County Sanitary District; Charles Hintze and Don Wieland of the Milwaukee Sewerage Commission; Fred A. Harper of the County Sanitation Districts of Orange County, California; Carmen F. Guarino of the City of Philadelphia; R.E. Graham of the City of San Diego; Charles B. Kaiser, Jr., of the Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District; James Lynch and John Cleary of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission; and Tom Gibbs, Philip J. Blunck and James R. Ellis of the Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle.

Also present at the meeting were Cliff Atkinson, Jr., of the American Water Works Association, and Donald G. Alexander, of the National League of Cities. Gibbs, who chaired the meeting, stated the hope that this group could evolve a means of influencing federal legislation to be more responsive to the needs of the nation's large cities and to better reflect the huge costs associated with the national clean water policies being considered.

Gibbs described several possible amendments to the Water Pollution Control Act to help finance sewerage facilities. But getting the funds to implement the act clearly was as important as amending the act itself. Everyone agreed that the top priority should be to persuade Congress to appropriate for fiscal year 1970 the full amount previously authorized for cash grants.

No solutions emerged from this first meeting, but those present approved of Gibbs's suggestion to form a special committee, consisting of representatives of the major sewerage agencies in the United States. They agreed that such a committee — which could speak with one voice on water pollution abatement matters — would be of great benefit, not only in pressing for federal financial aid, but in exchanging information on labor relations, salaries, relations with regulatory agencies, and other policies and decisions common to large sewerage agencies.

Donald Alexander of the National League of Cities offered to help by keeping the committee advised of relevant federal activities. The sewerage agency representatives discussed this possibility but decided it was inadvisable for the agencies to become a part of either the League of Cities or the Water Pollution Control Federation because of the special needs of the large cities.

Plans were made for the committee to meet again in October in

Dallas, where many would be attending the Water Pollution Control Federation convention. Gibbs agreed to coordinate the group's activities and to serve as chairman of a steering committee. Other appointed to the Steering Committee were Messrs. V.W. Bacon (Chicago), Glen J. Hopkins (Kansas City, Mo.), A.J. Popowski (Middlesex County, N.J.), and James F. Wright (Delaware River Basin Commission).

Meeting in Dallas, representatives from 22 agencies considered various possibilities: The large sewerage agencies might form a committee within either the League of Cities or the WPCF, or they could form a new association. While some advocated joining an existing organization — both to lower costs and to avoid duplication of effort — the consensus was to establish a new association representing only the major sewerage agencies. The men favoring this approach pointed out that at the Washington meeting there was clearly disagreements between the League of Cities representative and those of the sewerage agencies; also, the WPCF was technically oriented and not properly geared toward lobbying for a special interest.

Those present at Dallas voted unanimously to ask the Steering Committee (at a meeting to be held later that same day) to decide on a name for the new association, to establish a population limit for membership, and to consider how to finance the organization.

The agency men discussed a number of legislative and financial problems but took no further action except to authorize the Steering Committee to send a telegram to Congressman Dingell endorsing his support of a \$1 billion appropriation for construction grants. The Steering Committee, having agreed upon the name "Association of Metropolitan Sewerage Agencies," later sent the telegram to Dingell, listing the 22 metropolitan agencies represented by the new association and stating, "The total population served by the above agencies is nearly 43 million people, or 22 percent of the total national population. Information collected by our group has convinced us that the full one billion dollar appropriation can be utilized this fiscal year."

And so AMSA was launched, although it had as yet no bylaws or constitution, no budget or means of raising money, no officers, no paid staff, and no permanent home. All these matters were soon attended to. In April 1970, the meeting that officially launched AMSA took place in Washington, D.C. Present were Tom Gibbs, Glen Hopkins, Charles Kaiser, A.J. Popowski, Ben Sosewitz, (who had just succeeded Vinton Bacon in Chicago) James Wright, and Preston Tack. Gibbs introduced Lee White of the law firm Semer, White and Jacobson, who had agreed to represent AMSA in Washington and to offer advice and legal counsel to

the association. It was at this meeting that AMSA asked White to draw up the papers to incorporate the association in Washington, D.C. White further agreed that his office would serve as the Washington address for AMSA. The men who attended this meeting are now considered the "incorporating members" of AMSA.

Recruiting Members

Although the first meeting of representatives from metropolitan sewerage agencies was called primarily to discuss one major legislative problem, members of AMSA soon realized that not only currently proposed legislation, but also the policies and procedures of federal agencies affected their agencies. It seemed obvious that the larger AMSA's membership became, the stronger would be its voice in Washington, and from the beginning the Association took steps to recruit new members. However, it was not until Preston Tack, a staff assistant to Tom Gibbs, became the first Executive Secretary, in 1974, that AMSA adopted a carefully planned and adequately financed recruitment program. So successful was this program that now, ten years after its inception, AMSA has 76 members.

In the beginning, membership in AMSA had been restricted to metropolitan or city sewerage agencies serving a population of 250,000 or more. A subsequent change in the bylaws made it possible, however, for agencies serving a smaller population to become members if there is only one other AMSA member from the same state.

But there must be more than a membership list to influence congressmen and important agency executives. David Dominick, commissioner of the then Federal Water Pollution Control Administration, was the first of a long line of key Washington people, including congressmen, members of their staffs, and high officials of federal agencies, who addressed sessions of AMSA's membership and Board meetings. Under Lee White's able tutelage, members of the association spent countless hours writing, telephoning, and visiting congressmen, members of their staff, and agency administrators. In a surprisingly short time, government personnel concerned with water pollution control were not only aware of AMSA, but began to turn to it for help and advice because of the expert knowledge and cooperative attitude displayed by its members.

Among the men who labored to establish AMSA's credibility, in addition to those on the Steering Committee, were Ben Sosewitz, of Chicago; Fred A. Harper, of the County Sanitation Districts of Orange County, California; and Sol Seid, of the Middlesex (N.J.) County Sewerage Authority.

One of AMSA's first actions was testifying before Senator Edmund Muskie's Subcommittee on Air and Water Pollution. Tom Gibbs, speaking for AMSA, stated that the federal construction grant program should provide for the needs of the larger metropolitan communities. Following his testimony, the subcommittee asked for additional information, which Gibbs provided. Later, the Federal Water Pollution Control Administration asked Gibbs to represent AMSA on an ad hoc committee that would aid in the review of design criteria for construction grant eligibility. Gibbs's participation on the committee resulted in several important revisions.

October 1970

At the October 1970 meeting, the first Board of Trustees (later called the Board of Directors) was elected by the Steering Committee for an initial six-month period. After some discussion, the then members of the Steering Committee, Tom Gibbs, Charles B. Kaiser, Jr., Ralph E. Graham, Ben Sosewitz, Glen J. Hopkins, and A.J. Popowski, plus Wayne Neibel, of Memphis, Tennessee, were appointed as the first Board of Trustees, with Gibbs as President.

Even before the Board of Trustees was appointed, AMSA had held regularly scheduled meetings. The Steering Committee, and later the Board, met at least twice a year, and there also was an annual general membership meeting. Meetings are held in different cities around the country. In the early years, the Board met where it could, and accommodations were sometimes spartan. William Love recalls in particular a meeting in a dismal basement room in a San Francisco hotel.

Not long after the appointment of the first AMSA Board, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was created and AMSA took immediate steps to establish contacts with people there. When EPA set up a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to consider proposed guidelines, Tom Gibbs represented AMSA at the TAG meetings. In September 1971, EPA Administrator William D. Ruckelshaus and several members of his staff attended a luncheon held during an AMSA general membership meeting. Ruckelshaus urged AMSA and EPA to work together to improve the nation's environment, and he pledged that EPA would look to AMSA for assistance in problems involving the cities. Although still in its infancy, AMSA had become an organization consulted by members of the federal government concerned with water pollution matters.

The directors of AMSA soon perceived the need to keep member agencies informed of pending legislation and regulations as well as prob-

lems encountered by one sewerage agency that would be of concern to others. Because at this time AMSA had neither the staff nor the money to publish a newsletter on a regular basis, occasional General Information Bulletins were prepared and sent to all members. These were intended specifically for reading by the governing boards or councils of the member agencies.

As time went on, the number of such bulletins increased and the range of subjects widened. At a meeting in October 1972, for instance, members voted to include a suggestion by Chuck Henry, Seattle Metro's Director of Operations, in a forthcoming Bulletin. Henry's suggestion was that AMSA propose to EPA that members of the EPA staff serve for a period of time with AMSA agencies to gain experience and understanding operating agencies. An earlier 1972 Bulletin dealt with the role that Federal Regional Councils could play in the management of federal activity in each of the ten federal regions. Still another Bulletin of that year dealt with accelerated payments of federal grants.

The young association found, too, that the scope of its activities was growing. Task forces were appointed to deal with specific topics, such as an AMSA-WPCF survey of metropolitan municipal wastewater treatment facilities.

The 1972 Water Pollution Control Act

A major project in 1972 involved efforts to pass S 2770, the Water Pollution Control Act. As Tom Gibbs explained AMSA's ongoing efforts to obtain a workable law on water pollution, "Chuck Kaiser, Lee White and I had almost weekly meetings with members of Congress and the two Public Works committees to persuade them that certain special interest groups were pushing extremist positions contrary to the national interest."

The result of those groups pushing extremist positions was that early drafts of the legislation contained many totally unworkable programs. AMSA won some of these skirmishes, lost others, and gained compromises on still others. The ICR provision was the result of one such compromise. During the final days of the law's development in conference, White, Gibbs and Tack received many phone calls for assistance and advice, sometimes directly from the conference committee room.

Later, when AMSA members learned that President Nixon was planning to veto this bill, the association sent a telegram urging him to sign it. The President did veto the bill, but Congress overrode the veto.

With the enactment of 1972 law, the federal government created a massive new program for helping municipalities clean up their water.

However, there had been a major question of equity regarding the efforts that some large cities already had made on their own. Would the new law compensate these communities for previous expenditures, or would these cities pay a penalty for their progressive action by being left out of funding under the new law?

With the strong support of AMSA, the final law included Section 206, providing compensation for those communities that had begun construction of facilities under the previous law, which had far lower support levels than the 75 percent federal share authorized by the 1972 law. Actual reimbursement eventually came when Congress appropriated enough money to fulfill the promise of Section 206 (a). It was the most significant achievement of AMSA in its early years.

Passage of the new law was a milestone in the nation's efforts to clean up water pollution, but it did not solve all problems either for AMSA members or for the country. Almost immediately a major difficulty arose: President Nixon impounded some of the funds Congress had appropriated to implement the law. Eventually, the courts ruled that the President had no authority to impound funds either for this law or others. But in the meantime, there were delays, and by the time facilities could be built, costs had escalated far beyond initial estimates.

Also at this time, some actions by EPA were a cause of serious concern to members of AMSA, despite the early cordial relations between AMSA and the new agency. When President Nixon cut back on funds appropriated by Congress, AMSA considered, but discarded, the idea of filing suit against EPA. However, the association sent a letter to EPA Administrator Ruckelshaus requesting a meeting to discuss this and other problems.

One of these "other problems" was EPA's announced intention to publish proposed secondary treatment requirements. Early versions of the regulations indicated that they contained extreme requirements that would make most existing and many planned or under-construction plants obsolete and would drastically increase the costs of new facilities. AMSA asked its members to try to persuade high-level elected officials to call or wire the President and Ruckelshaus urging them to consider alternatives to secondary requirements and to base those requirements on reasonable criteria.

The secondary treatment problem demonstrates the lack of EPA flexibility that sewerage agencies have had to grapple with continually since passage of the 1972 act. As Bart Lynam commented, the government's intentions are good, but officials of EPA and other federal agencies tend to be unduly strict in their interpretation of the law and

also tend to impose the same requirements on all sewerage agencies, big and small, without taking into consideration varying needs and conditions.

A New AMSA Structure

Early in 1973, it became necessary for AMSA to restructure the association because Seattle Metro now found it necessary to limit the unusual contribution it had been making. In addition to the dedication, talent, and time given by President Gibbs, Preston Tack, and others from the Seattle Metro System, Seattle had provided office space and had absorbed many of the costs of running the association. Without these contributions, everyone agreed, AMSA would not have been formed and would not have achieved its record of major accomplishments; reimbursement under the 1972 Water Pollution Control Act; contributions to the rules and regulations adopted by EPA; public participation in EPA's implementation of the Act; and regulations to implement the user charge requirement.

The 1973 meeting was the last presided over by Tom Gibbs as president. His increased responsibilities in Seattle, which then included public transit management, made it impossible for him to be considered for reelection. Charles B. Kaiser of St. Louis was elected president, Wayne Neibel of Memphis, Vice President and Bart Lynam of Chicago Secretary-Treasurer, succeeding Neibel in that post.

As President, Kaiser initiated one change in proceedings: abolishing the 7:30 a.m. breakfasts.

The Board did not find it easy to decide what form the new AMSA structure should take. In view of the tremendous amount of support supplied by Lee White as legal counsel and in permitting his office to be used as a central clearinghouse, one suggestion was to move AMSA's headquarters to Washington, D.C. In the end, however, the Board appointed Preston Tack as Executive Secretary and worked out an agreement for his services with the Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle. The agreement was to be revised at the end of the year.

March 1974

A new matter of concern that came up for action at the 1974 general membership meeting was EPA's proposed toxic effluent standards. AMSA was in favor of standards but believed EPA was moving too quickly, without sufficient information. Therefore the members unanimously adopted a resolution urging the EPA administrator, "in

compliance with Section 101 (e) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 regarding public participation, to extend the public hearing on the matter of establishment of toxic pollutant effluent standards beyond its closing date of March 26, 1974, to conduct technical symposia on these proposed standards at several locations throughout the country as proposed in the Federal Register . . . and enter the record on the proposed toxic pollutant effluent standards so as to provide opportunity for thorough discussion, review, and public comment upon these proposed standards."

As a result of AMSA's resolution, EPA invited the association to form a task force to help establish toxic effluent regulations for municipal wastewater treatment plants.

Also at this meeting, Tom Gibbs spoke of his recent experience in working cooperatively with environmental groups, experience he felt had been rewarding and worth the effort and staff time required. Such cooperation, he said, increased the trust and credibility of the sewerage agency. He suggested that environmental groups be invited to attend workshops put on by AMSA and that sewerage agencies find out how local environmental groups felt about the agency and what they would like to see the agency do.

From time to time, AMSA's Board of Directors had discussed the possibility of admitting to membership areawide wastewater treatment agencies that did not fall into any of the categories envisioned when AMSA's bylaws were formulated. In 1974, the Board adopted new guidelines, which became official AMSA policy, that made it possible for an agency to become a member, provided it met certain criteria. These included the following:

1. Its charter must include authority to finance, construct, operate, and maintain wastewater treatment plants and/or systems.
2. It must be a municipal or other publicly owned corporation authorized under state law or interstate compact.
3. Except on the same general basis as provided for in the bylaws, the population within its boundaries, not served by other paid up AMSA members, must be 250,000 or more.
4. Other AMSA members or eligible agencies may exist or be formed within its boundaries.

Another activity in which AMSA had for some time been engaged was conducting seminars for the technical people in AMSA. These seminars, such as a West Coast Ocean Disposal Conference, chaired by Chuck Kaiser, were held in various parts of the country. AMSA now adopted a general policy stating that the association should, "whenever

possible, support, encourage, and sponsor activities of a special and regional nature which originate among and involve a number of its members and other large municipal and/or metropolitan agencies.”

AMSA had also expanded its participation in activities with other national organizations, as in legislative conferences.

In October 1974 the directors turned their attention to where to locate the AMSA headquarters. Because Seattle Metro was soon moving to new quarters, it could no longer provide space to AMSA. The Board also was more and more often feeling the necessity for a Washington, D.C., presence, because of the constant need to be in touch with EPA and Congress. No decisions were made at this point, but during the next year staff studied the financial implications of moving to Washington, D.C.

The Washington Office

At the October 1975 Board meeting, the newly elected president of AMSA, Bart Lynam, proposed a way to resolve the D.C. office issue. He suggested that AMSA enter into a contract with Washington consultant Ron M. Linton. The Board then invited Linton to present his ideas and soon thereafter, at a special December 1975 meeting, unanimously approved a contract with his consulting firm. The transition was to take place over the next six months, during which Tack would complete projects in which he was already engaged and would transfer materials and assignments to the office headed by Ron Linton.

Preston Tack, speaking of those years with AMSA, recalls them as “challenging and interesting . . . Working with, and knowing, so many capable and dedicated managers of municipal wastewater treatment agencies was a real privilege,” he says. “In a few years AMSA earned an excellent reputation at the federal level. It was due, I’m convinced, to the willingness of member agency managers to involve themselves personally in federal committee hearings, in contacts with their congressional representatives, and in meetings with EPA.”

In 1976, AMSA began publication of its *Monthly Report*, sent to all members. The publication includes news of federal actions concerned with pollution control, pending legislation, rules and regulations, AMSA actions and plans, and reports from member agencies about their concerns and actions.

Amending the Clean Water Act

The Clean Water Act of 1972 had not, as its sponsors had hoped, solved the nation’s water pollution problems. This was due to a large

number of unforeseen problems: impoundment and inadequate appropriation of funds, inflation, unworkable rules and regulations drawn up by persons with good intentions but inadequate knowledge of the technology involved, contradictory goals of competing agencies, and inflexible administration of the law.

It was clear that Congress would have to rework the law to take into account the impossibility of meeting the original 1977 deadline imposed on municipalities for achieving secondary treatment levels, and to overhaul many other sections of the Act that had proven unworkable.

Congress began considering amendments in 1974, but by 1976 it had not yet agreed on changes. Further delays seemed likely over funding formulas and the numerous requirements that affected wastewater treatment by both private industry and public agencies.

AMSA members and staff, led by Chuck Kaiser, then-legislative chairman, spent many hours conferring with Congressmen, members of their staffs, and officials of concerned agencies who were working on the amendments. The eventual legislation, the Clean Water Act Amendments of 1977, included a new five-year authorization of more than \$26 billion for municipal construction grants, major changes in the states’ role in the construction program, an extension of the municipal deadline, and an added push toward innovative technologies. There also were adjustments to the pretreatment and industrial cost recovery requirements of the 1972 law.

AMSA played a key role on the ICR issue in particular. After extensive negotiations between AMSA and the Senate Environment Committee staff, an agreement was reached to provide a 25,000 gallon per day cutoff, below which industrial costs would not be collected. Also, the payment of ICR fees was converted from a plant-by-plant basis to a systemwide basis, a concept developed by AMSA member Charles Samowitz of New York City. In addition, the law included AMSA’s suggestion that 50 percent of all ICR funds collected were to be retained by the municipal agency.

Another important issue that AMSA helped shape was user charges. AMSA members convinced Congress to allow communities to use ad valorem taxes, instead of user charges, under special circumstances. Thus all AMSA members that otherwise might have faced major restructuring of local financial arrangements were able to continue using systems already in effect in their areas.

The passage of the act was by no means the end of AMSA’s role. As EPA began writing the clean water regulations, it became very apparent that the agency was not accurately reflecting the legislative intent of the

act. AMSA members met on numerous occasions with EPA over the next year to make sure the regulations met that intent.

Since 1976, AMSA's Board had been holding quarterly meetings with top officials at EPA. Because of AMSA's important contributions to the 1977 Clean Water Act regulations, EPA Administrator Doug Costle chose to officially sign those regulations during one of the regular quarterly meetings with AMSA. The ceremony took place on September 27, 1978.

AMSA efforts also played a major role in pushing EPA to confront a problem which threatened many AMSA members: the lack of coordination between EPA's construction grants funding and the agency's enforcement activities. Chuck Kaiser demanded that assistant administrators for both enforcement and the water program be present during its next meeting with Administrator Costle, so that both arms of EPA could be confronted with the problem. The meeting was put off twice, but by the time it finally was held, in the fall of 1978, EPA had managed to create an internal policy that became known as the municipal enforcement strategy. In essence, this was a pledge by the agency that enforcement actions against municipal agencies would be tied to funding schedules for construction grants needed to fulfill the requirements of the Act. This strategy became EPA's official policy for the implementation of the Section 301 (i) time extensions that were approved in the 1977 amendments.

Meanwhile, AMSA was continuing its regular activities.

Regulations concerning ocean discharge were of serious concern to some AMSA members at this time. AMSA Counsel Lee White presented a report at that March meeting on the kinds of problems being experienced by West Coast members. He suggested that perhaps AMSA staff might provide support of the members' efforts to change ocean discharge policy. In previous consideration of this matter, he noted, the Board had decided that agencies would have to deal with problems of this sort on their own. This was partly because in the past, AMSA had significantly less staff, which would have made assistance impossible. In White's opinion, the issue now was sufficiently broad to warrant support. He added that certain concerns are peculiar to West Coast members, others to East Coast members, and still others to inland members. He believed if staff were to address only the issues common to all members, AMSA would split into small interest groups.

Board members agreed that AMSA did not have the resources to assist members engaged in litigation, but they did vote to permit staff to provide appropriate support in general research and lobbying to the West Coast members on the ocean discharge issue. This motion signaled

an important change in AMSA policy. Subsequently, a number of East Coast agencies expressed interest in obtaining waivers, and an AMSA Special Committee on Marine Waivers was created.

Expanding into Technical, International Issues

By October 1977, federal agencies and Congress were paying increasing attention to AMSA. The AMSA staff had tried to convey to the government that AMSA agencies have the major responsibility for turning the terms of the Clean Water Act into the actual collection, treatment, and handling of wastewaters, and that it is AMSA members who have the pragmatic knowledge of what does and does not work.

But AMSA's activities now involved much more than simply lobbying the federal government. The Washington staff was busy keeping members up to date, through AMSA bulletins and newsletters, on various technical issues and the many activities of EPA and Congress. The AMSA committee system, formed the year before, also was proving to be very active and successful. The committees covered a variety of issues, such as industrial cost recovery and pretreatment, and allowed AMSA to use its members' time and expertise more effectively.

By this time AMSA's program of sponsoring major conferences on technical issues was firmly established. Among the conferences held in 1976 and 1977 were a Finance and Management Conference and an Environmental Technical Conference. Linton reported in October 1977 that EPA intended to approve a long-pending 208 conference grant application to hold six regional meetings. These meetings would focus on the policy and politics of the 208 program. Besides AMSA representatives, 208 planners and elected local officials would participate.

By the following summer, AMSA had conducted six meetings on 208 under its grant from EPA. Out of those meetings came the realization that EPA would soon be announcing pretreatment requirements that would be difficult for nonmember agencies both to understand and to implement. This led AMSA to apply for another grant, this time to hold a series of regional meetings and a technical conference on the issue of pretreatment. The pretreatment grant eventually was approved and resulted in a series of seminars in 1979.

Another item illustrating AMSA's expanded interests was the discussion in July 1978 of a program for exchanging technical information between the United States and Europe. Eventually this led to a "European Technology Tour" by several AMSA members in September 1979. And as a result of that trip, AMSA joined the U.S. National

Committee of the International Association of Water Pollution Research, in order to further widen the association's involvement in international activities.

Meanwhile, another AMSA president, Fred Harper, was elected to serve in 1978 and 1979. The current president, Ray Harrington, came into the post in late 1979.

Legal Issues

One issue that cropped up continually in AMSA affairs was whether and how to get involved in legal disputes. In July 1978, for example, AMSA members discussed a suit brought by the city of Philadelphia against EPA. In dispute was the manner in which the EPA administrator was replying to requests for time extensions in implementing the Clean Water Act. Because this was a precedent-setting case, Philadelphia's Bill Marrazzo urged AMSA to support Philadelphia by filing a Friend of the Court brief. AMSA Counsel Lee White agreed because, he said, if Philadelphia lost, everyone would lose. After considerable discussion, the Board adopted a policy statement on the issue and instructed AMSA's counsel, working with the president and executive director, to consider filing a brief.

The policy statement read in part: "there (appeared to) have been some instances in which the Administrator is using his authority to extend time limits in a manner to coerce or pressure municipal agencies to agree to construction schedules and performance standards which are impracticable and unachievable. In other cases EPA is apparently choosing to file law suits and seeking penalties rather than availing itself of the administrative extension mechanism Congress provided in 301 (i)."

AMSA later did file a brief in the case, which was resolved through a consent order.

Another legal issue was AMSA's role, if any, in the suit by the State of Illinois against Milwaukee. By August 1979, both Illinois and Milwaukee had petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court for review, and Milwaukee had asked AMSA for support. The Board finally decided, at Counsel Lee White's recommendation, to file a brief urging the Supreme Court to hear the appeal. The Court agreed, and the case is up for consideration in fall 1980.

The upshot of the AMSA litigation debate, resulting from discussions in October 1979, was that all decisions on AMSA's legal involvement will rest with AMSA Board. If a decision is ever needed before a Board meeting can be scheduled, however, the president, executive direc-

tor, and counsel of AMSA can act in lieu of the Board.

A Special Committee on Legal Affairs was formed in late 1979 to further explore the issue. Members of the committee, all of whom are lawyers, also expect to provide a clearinghouse on legal proceedings and documents of interest to AMSA lawyers, so everyone does not have to "re-invent the wheel", in the words of Lee White, when confronted with a legal problem.

Structural Changes

By August 1979, the AMSA executive director reported that many more agencies had expressed interest in joining AMSA, and that over the next year membership could increase from 72 to 80. At the same time, the Board was dogged by the question of creating some new category of membership to accommodate those agencies that did not meet the regular AMSA membership requirements. The question had been discussed frequently in the past.

That October the Board approved a bylaw amendment that would create a new membership category called "Associate Member." Eligible for this category would be public agencies with sewerage responsibilities that are too small for regular membership, which requires a population of at least 250,000 in an agency's service area. Associate members would be entitled to all membership services but would not be allowed to vote in either committee or general membership meetings. The bylaw amendment also stipulated that the top priority on membership rights would continue to go to metropolitan areawide treatment agencies, and it would ban joint membership or the existence of two members in the same population area. The bylaw amendment also would create a membership category called "subscriber," which would entitle non-public agencies, such as engineering consulting firms, to all the AMSA's bulletins and newsletters. The subscribers, who would pay \$1,000 a year, also could attend AMSA meetings but could not vote.

Another structural change AMSA made at this point, which further signalled the organization's maturation, was the decision to hold its annual meetings separate from those of the Water Pollution Control Federation. The joint AMSA-WPCF membership meetings had been going on since AMSA's inception.

At this time AMSA also decided to provide staff assistance, through technical and lobbying support, for AMSA members with water supply responsibilities. During the first, experimental year of the service, AMSA's Washington staff would provide technical bulletins and a

monthly newsletter, called *Addenda*, on congressional, administrative and regional water supply activities.

A New Decade

The phenomenal expansion of AMSA's membership and activities in its first decade prepares it well for the problems and issues it will have to face in the 1980s. From a dozen or so metropolitan agencies concerned only with funding for sewage construction grants, the organization has grown to include 76 agencies. Besides advising both the legislative and executive branches of government on all clean water-related issues, AMSA keeps its members well-informed about federal activities through bulletins and newsletters; it helps its members share information among themselves; and it provides forums for technical education through its many conferences.