

## Advocacy Update for April 8, 2025

### Worcester County: Water / Wastewater Changes

**Summary:** The County's wastewater / water fund is at an approximate 9-million-dollar deficit. All W/WW districts have contributed to this aside from Ocean Pines. An intercounty loan has been approved by the Commissioners to the W/WW fund, but to repay that, all W/WW districts will see a rate increase. Ocean Pines is looking at an 18% increase from FY25, but there are several ways to go about solving this deficit issue including:

1. Keep FY26 rates the same
2. Each service area becomes financially independent / self sufficient
3. Combine the 11 districts into a single service area and spread the debt
4. General fund support

**Upcoming Events:** May 6th public hearing. Worcester County Commissioners' room in Snow Hill.

### Worcester County: OCMD Comprehensive Plan

**Summary:** All counties and municipalities are required by law to approve a comprehensive plan every ten years. OCMD held a joint work session between the Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission on April 1. This is the framework for legislation for the next decade and is (and has been) used as justification for legislation. To have items in the comprehensive plan is important for guiding legislation in the future.

**Upcoming Events:** July 15 public hearing. Mid-August back to council for approval. October adoption.

### Worcester: Offshore Wind

**Summary:** Feb 18th, Worcester County presented a draft of their zoning changes to West Ocean City. This is to prohibit offshore wind from its land use. The discussion has been tabled as the county attorney is verifying the legality of these changes. Additionally, the local Watermen have ended their negotiations with DNR and U.S. Wind as U.S. Wind seems to fail to understand the complexities removing several square miles of premium fishing waters as well as the only two fish houses in West Ocean City and how that would impact Worcester County, and the State's, commercial fishing industry.

### Wicomico: Biorefinery

The Adkins Road biorefinery project has been denied its appeal and will cease construction. This comes after a stop-work order was issued last month. The owner of this Biorefinery can pursue legal action against the county, but their stop-work order is still in effect until a judicial decision.

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