



Peduto forges ahead to restructure PWSA leadership

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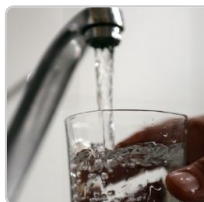
Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto issued an executive order Monday to begin restructuring oversight at the troubled Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority.

The directive follows recommendations last month from a mayoral panel that's studying PWSA. Specifically, Mr. Peduto ordered the creation of an independent Board of Nominators that will appoint the PWSA board. Formed at first by mayoral appointments, the nominators board will select its own successors in perpetuity.

Mr. Peduto's order also directs his panel to bring in outside legal counsel. That counsel is to prepare a contract between PWSA and



The contract should be implemented by March 31, according to the order.



Adam Smeltz

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An 18-page report from the panel urged officials to keep PWSA a public agency but overhaul governance to prevent political influence.

“This is not a statement on current political leadership or the current board, but an observation about what’s happened over the last several decades,” panel member Jared Cohon, president emeritus of Carnegie Mellon University, said in December.

Pennsylvania Auditor General Eugene DePasquale also has pushed PWSA to avoid political influence in its operations. Under longstanding practices, the mayor has appointed all PWSA board members with City Council approval. The city maintains ownership of the PWSA system.



Past PWSA leadership has faced criticism for not keeping up with maintenance or raising enough revenue — through rates — to sustain the water system, among other problems. Failures including water main breaks and boil-water advisories have become more common, with the latest boil alert having been issued Friday for part of Lawrenceville. PWSA lifted that advisory Sunday afternoon.

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