

Drinking Water Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

January 15, 2025

Virtual Meeting (Teams)

Members Present

Yone Akagi, Large Water Systems

Greg DeBlase, Oregon Environmental Health Association

Ashley Davis, Conference of Local Health Officials

Jessica Dorsey, Pacific NW Section, American Water Works Association

Lacey Goeres-Priest, Vice Chair, League of Oregon Cities

Michael Grimm, Special Districts Association of Oregon

Cheyenne Holliday, Water Consumers

Matt Johnson, Oregon Association of Water Utilities

Karen Lewotsky, Environmental Advocacy Groups

Chris MacQuarrie, Plumbers/Backflow Testers

Beth Myers, Oregon Environmental Lab Association

Craig Sheahan, American Council of Engineering Companies of Oregon

Members Absent

Sandra Bishop, League of Women Voters of Oregon

Jason Green, Chair, Oregon Association of Water Utilities

Adam Jackson, Privately Owned Water Systems

Guests

Gene Hubbard, in place of Adam Jackson for Privately Owned Water Systems

Alyssa MacDonald, City of Hillsboro

DWS Staff

Samina Panwar, Michelle Byrd, Kari Salis, Adam DeSemple, Paula Rich

Welcome/Roll Call

Lacey Goeres-Priest welcomed new member Ashley Davis and took roll call.

Agenda Check

No suggestions

October Meeting Minutes and Action Items Review

Mike motioned to approve the October minutes and Jessica seconded. A vote was taken and minutes were unanimously approved.

Action items are listed at the end of this document. Short review and discussion about best management practices (BMPs) for new members. Mike reported that a BMP worked very well in real life for dealing with a broken mainline.

Member Update and Introduction/Public Input

The group welcomed Ashley Davis, new member representing the Conference of Local Health Officials, and Gene Hubbard, who attended in place of Adam Jackson for privately owned water systems.

Because of the new administration, Lacey suggested discussing fluoridation and whether there will be changes to regulatory framework and rules such as the lead and copper rule (LCR) or lead service line inventory. Craig brought up disaster management and response, which has been in the news from California.

Mike: AWWA Legislative Committee met recently. New administration would not be able to withdraw the LCR. PFAS rule could be withdrawn if they so wish. Yone noted that she thought it was the reverse: PFAS could not be withdrawn, LCR could.

Samina: There are a couple of bills in the state legislative session related to emergency response and wildfires. Not sure whether they affect drinking water or PWSs. DWS has contract in place to assist PWS with VOC analyses in case of a wildfire event like in 2020.

Program Update and Discussion (Samina Panwhar)

- Reviewed origin and purpose, groups represented, rules, responsibilities of members. Election of officers has not been happening regularly. **Action Item:** Add discussion about elections to April meeting agenda and remember to elect officers at July meeting.
- Members should suggest topics for the agenda. Draft agenda is usually distributed well before the meeting.
- Reviewed numbers and types of systems that DWS oversees.
- Reviewed staffing and recruitment for new positions.
- Federal funding

- Legislative session: Three bills so far that are relevant to DWS. Will be revised over the next few months. **Action Item:** Samina will email links to the bills.
 - HB3078: DWS to establish a pilot program for training water system operators.
 - SB845: Public Utility Commission can order the acquisition of a water utility by another water utility when service is not safe or adequate. Question: Who is responsible financially for the takeover?
 - HB3052: requires DEQ to study PFAS. Question: For what purpose? What is the intended gain?
 - Mike noted that the bills seem similar to the federal Water System Restructuring Act. OHA is not allowed to lobby for or against any bills, although they do provide analyses.
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- LCRR service line inventories: 91.4% of systems have submitted inventories. About 100 systems will receive violations.
- LCRR 24-hour action level exceedance notification: Clock starts when regulators notify the system of the exceedance.
- An article in the January ePipeline will provide guidance for service line inventories in the Consumer Confidence Reports.
- Federal rule adoption: Three new federal rules must be implemented in 2027. DWS must adopt state rules before applying for primacy (PFAS, CCR).
 - May have to ask for primacy extension for LCRR/LCRI (rulemaking delayed for this rule). New administration may review, void, or change.
- Report on USACE's drawdown injunction: Two systems were adversely affected. Lacey reported that Detroit will have a drawdown next fall, affecting Salem.
- Program strategies in 2025 and beyond.

Disadvantaged Community (DAC) Definition Revision (Adam DeSempfle)

- Notes were sent to DWAC members prior to meeting.
- Review of timeline regarding DAC since November 2021 when BIL funding announced. BIL prioritizes DACs.
- Draft revised DAC definition considered multiple socioeconomic metrics, not just median household income (MHI) (the definition before revising).
- Oregon (and other states) included the metrics People of Color and Limited English Speaking. Counsel was concerned that those metrics may violate Civil

Rights Title VI. Adoption of DAC definition delayed. Those metrics were replaced with others.

- Many scenarios using the proposed metrics were run and analyzed.
- Open House held on October 29, 2024.
- No comments received during 30-day comment period.
- The revised definition includes an additional 79 public water systems and a total population of 2,559,190 and all nine federally recognized tribes.
- The revised definition will be used for upcoming projects submitted by the February 15 deadline.
- Final report will be posted at <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/HEALTHYENVIRONMENTS/DRINKINGWATER/SRF/Pages/ranking.aspx>
- The adopted revised DAC definition now defines disadvantaged communities as:
 - Any public water system (PWS) with a Median Household Income (MHI) less than the state MHI.
 - OR, if a PWS has an MHI equal to or greater than 100% of the state MHI but less than 120% of the state MHI, then the system must meet two (2) of four (4) criteria:
 - Greater than the state poverty rate,
 - Greater than the state unemployment rate,
 - Greater than the state rate of people with less than a high school education,
 - Greater than the state housing cost burdened rate.

Action items review (Lacey Goeres-Priest)

Carryover from October:

- Lacey: Set up a meeting for BMP workgroup to finalize BMPs. Review flowchart. (Email Kari first; she may have some information that will make this project more efficient.)
- Michelle: Summarize the Consumer Confidence Report Rule Revisions presented at a previous meeting. (Michelle completed this action item immediately after this meeting.)

New Action Items:

- Add discussion about elections to April meeting agenda and remember to elect officers at July meeting.

Closing Comments

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Next Meeting

April 16, 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

