

Drinking Water Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

April 15, 2026

In-Person and Virtual Meeting (Teams)

Members and Alternate Members Present

Ashley Davis, Conference of Local Health Officials

Craig Sheahan, American Council of Engineering Companies of Oregon

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

Jessica Dorsey, Pacific NW Section, American Water Works Association

Mike Masters, Large Water Systems

Virtual Members

Sandra Bishop, League of Women Voters of Oregon

Caroline Gross-Regan, Oregon Environmental Health Association

Adam Jackson, Privately Owned Water Systems

Chris MacQuarrie, Plumbers/Backflow Testers

Kim Ramsay, Oregon Environmental Laboratory Association

Karen Lewotsky, Environmental Advocacy Groups

Craig Harper, Watershed Councils

Members Absent

Jason Green, Chair, Oregon Association of Water Utilities

Michael Grimm, Special Districts Association of Oregon

Cheyenne Holliday, Water Consumers

Beth Myers, Oregon Environmental Lab Association

DWS Staff

Michelle Byrd, Amy Word, Adam DeSemples, Sue Yellowtail, Tony Fields and **Kari Salis**. (bold in person)

Guest attendees

Marcus Stovall, State Plumbing program assistant chief

Max Butler, State Plumbing program chief

January meeting minutes and action items review

Jessica Dorsey motioned to approve the January minutes and Mike Masters seconded. A vote was taken and minutes were unanimously approved. All said Aye, no opposed.

- Agenda check: Adding Max Butler, State Plumbing Chief. Max gave an overview of the program. Max has been the chief for about 7 months now. Current effort for Max is outreach, which is why he is here today. Adopting 2026 code changes tomorrow, nothing that will necessarily affect the drinking water industry. Plumbing technical bulletin for smaller developments (cottage homes in a group), working with DWS, DEQ etc to make sure we all understand where state plumbing code applies vs other state rules. Kari noted that DWS appreciates the partnership (noted that Carrie Gentry, DWS, is also on the State Plumbing board). Sandra appreciates Max's efforts at defining where plumbing code oversight begins/ends.
- Public input for additional topics: none
- Program update, Acting Section Manager, Kari Salis
 - DWAC representation. Terms end June 2026: Ashley Davis, Cheyenne Holiday, Chris MacQuarrie, Karen Lewotsky. DWS will send a letter in may requesting continued or new representations. 3 year terms, alternates are allowed with a less formal process.
 - Federal rule updates
 - CCR rule – adopted by DWS. Some of the provisions are being implemented right away.
 - PFAS
 - Second rule version is at OMB which is the last step.
 - DWS submitted the primacy extension of 2 years, due from EPA by April 26, 2026, so extension to April 2028. DWS may or may not be able to get primacy by April 2028.
 - LCRI Primacy extension to be submitted by September 2026
 - EPA decided not to change rule. Extension allows us to get primacy by September 2028. Extension agreement gives us the authority to apply rules in Oregon before primacy.
 - Perchlorate rule – Proposed Jan 2026
 - EPA determined to regulate, later withdrew, unusual step but the costs outweigh the benefits.

- Court said EPA didn't have authority to withdraw so EPA must regulate perchlorate.
- DWS commented on some portions, including the proposed MCL. Oregon supported 20 ug/L MCL (vs 40 and 80 ug/L). Worked with OHA toxicologists in making comments. NE Oregon has some issues with perchlorate.
- System restructuring rule – AWIA. For systems that are struggling with compliance, requires state to consider regionalization (managerial regionalization as an example).
 - Proposed, no news on final
- Contaminant Candidate List 6 has come out. 75 chems, microplastics, Pharmaceuticals, PFAS, DPBs, pathogens.
- Kari reminded folks about the SDWA Regulatory Determinations process. Established in 1996 SDWA Amendments. Identify contaminants, evaluate suitability for regulation using 3 criteria, then regulation (or not). Every 5 years (sixth list = 30 years). EPA has determined to regulate a total of one contaminant as a result of this process.
- Program funding (IIJA: infrastructure investment and jobs act; GS: general supplemental; EC: emerging contaminants)
 - General funds – state revenue forecast includes a \$110k reduction this biennium. These funds represent 30-ish percent of overall budget. There may be future cuts to the general fund.
 - Federal funding – about 60% of the overall budgets
 - PWSS/Primacy Grant – been around since Oregon took primacy for the program
 - DWSRF Base – reduced due to Congressionally-directed spending. Came about in the late 90s. Program can take up to 31% of the fund to fund the program. Has been reduced pretty significantly.
 - IIJA-General Supplemental and IIJA-EC – that has been able to make up the losses due to the Congressionally-directed spending. DWS is applying for the last year of this funding.
 - Other funds/fee revenues – a bit less than 10% of overall budget.
 - Annual water system fee

- Plan review
- Operator certification
- Backflow/cross-connection fees. This one is almost always in the red. It is in statute, so difficult to change. Other fees above are not in statute, but generally have to support the activities that they're meant for.
- There are time limits to using some of these funds. DWS does not know if there will be a federal solution prior to what we consider the "funding cliff". FY2026 looks to be a 1.3 million dollar reduction.
- State rule implementation
 - CCR
 - Adopted,
- Statewide/Interagency coordination
 - Regionalization. Several small systems around Woodburn hooked up to Woodburn, which solved a regional contaminant issue for those systems. Karen Lewotsky wanted to know who we were working with. Kari will get back to her with a name. Sue Yellowtail noted that Nate Stice from Regional Solutions is the contact.
 - Governor's regional solutions team. Looking at what the barriers are for systems, and what can be done at the state level to assist those systems.
 - Continued emergency response planning
 - Coordination with Oregon Emergency Management, DEQ, OHA's HSPR (health and safety preparedness and response) on continued operations plans.
 - Cybersecurity
 - DWS can provide basics to PWSs, refer systems to CISA. DWS is not the key agency, we are not experts in cybersecurity. Transparency for DWS has been important to our program.
 - Reservoir drawdowns
 - Many state agencies are working with US Army Corp of Engineers to minimize impacts. Planning on drawing down Detroit reservoir for fish passage mostly.
 - Legislative bills passed

- HB4005: creates “water professionals week” first week of October
- Several bills about easing permitting processes in other agencies (OHA not mentioned).
- Federal lawsuit from groundwater users in LUBGWMA vs certain landowners in the LUBGMWA (“Pearson et al vs Port of Morrow et al”)
 - Subpoena to OHA to produce documents
 - EPH (OHA’s Environmental Public Health): Domestic well test results, fact sheets, correspondence
 - DWS:
 - Engineering plans for Irrigon and Boardman
 - List of 71 public water systems in the LUBGWMA
 - List of all violations of the 71 systems from 2000 to the present
 - List of all public notices required from 2009 to the present
 - Instructions on how to find all chemical data on Data Online
- Due to anticipated reduction in funding, DWS is working on prioritizing our work
 - What is required for primacy
 - What is essential for public health protection
 - Using a scale of moderate to low priority
 - Many tasks are scalable
 - We need to determine benefit vs effort
 - We recognize that we can’t do it all
- SRF overview and updates, PPC Unit Manager, Tony Fields
 - SRF Base Program
 - EPA capacity grant so we can provide low interest loans for water systems for infrastructure projects. Mostly loan, occasionally principal forgiveness. Terms are longer and rates are better than the open market.
 - SRF funds have a two year budget period but we can ask for extensions (up to 3 years). SRF used to be the only funding source for water systems until BILL (now IJJA).

- SRF program provides the bulk of the funding for DWS staffing and partners to implement DWS' overall efforts.
- 69% of the award are reserved for infrastructure projects. The idea is that eventually these awards would stop and then revolving nature of the loans would support the ongoing infrastructure projects. Losing the 31% for program support would be catastrophic for state programs. Sandra Bishop asked who determines the set asides. Adam DeSempole answered the question in the chat: EPA establishes these.
- IIJA
 - Three funding opportunities for 5 years, last year for applications is for FY 2026. Three opportunities are: general supplemental, emerging contaminants and Lead Service Line. DWS will apply the first two of the three, as we don't have LSL funding needs. Tony noted that while we expect to have significant interest in loans for these projects, the timing of the funding will make it challenging to meet those needs. Craig Sheahan asked about how much percentage of the overall DWS budget is composed of the IIJA funding. Adam DeSempole noted that IIJA makes up a large amount of the SRF funding available to the states.
- Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment (DWINSA)
 - Assessment is for 20 years from the time of the survey. Used as a basis to allot DWSRF grant monies to the states. We anticipate data collection will begin later this spring.
- Earmarks/Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS)
 - CDS results in reduced funding for state DWSRF capacity grants, so a CDS will result in a reduction in the available set asides to run DWS.
- Funding Cliff
 - CDS have cut the annual base SRF from 35% in 2022 to over 60% in 2026. Once IJAA funding ends after this year, DWS will only have the base SRF funding to use. If CDS continues, that will represent a tremendous reduction in capacity for the program. Lacey asked if there was likely to be additional funding, Tony Fields and Adam DeSempole noted that it was not likely. Craig Harper asked if there is a list of CDS DW Funds Oregon has received in the past 5-10 years. Adam

DeSemples provided the CDS as a national amount, noting that the CDSs have been increasing each year.

- DMCE update, Michelle Byrd, DMCE unit manager
 - Data Processing – larger volume of data to process for 2025. We lost a few staff to retirement and other leave. Hired a new staff in January. EPA file review noted that DWS is above the national average for percentage of systems to return to compliance. DWS also received EPA's SDWIS Data Quality Silver award for best primacy agency. Transitioning labs to data portal which will reduce manual data entry and speed up processing times.
 - Projects – updating interactive maps, water system boundary data, providing new tools for regulators and water suppliers like the turbidity graphing tool for surface systems, creating data dashboard.
 - Additional Efforts – new violations planned for 2026 including some required actions from the 2021 EPA file review. DWS just received the 2025 EPA file review, so likely more to come.
 - Looking Forward - SDWIS transition to a new data system in October 2026 – EPA cloud service. States are expected to implement in 3 to 5 years. EPA will eventually stop supporting SDWIS. This will require DWS to rebuild Data Online and other interfacing applications.
- Kari Salis and Amy Word – LCRI updates
 - Looking for a DWAC subcommittee for some issues. Adam Jackson, Mike Masters, Lacey Goeres-Priest, and Jessica Dorsey volunteered. Ashley Davis said she can provide an LPHA perspective if needed.
 - Baseline inventory due Nov 1, 2027, need to have an address and list any connector information.
 - Revising the spreadsheet to include addresses and connector info. Not using technical assistance providers anymore.
 - Also testing in schools and childcare facilities
 - Working with DELC and ODE to get lists of k-8 schools for community systems. Rule applies to charter and public, but not private schools. Mike Masters asked what the role of water suppliers will be. Kari Salis noted it is the responsibility of the public schools to test, but water

suppliers will need to coordinate testing at private schools. Adam Jackson asked what a system would do if a childcare facility does not allow access. Kari noted that something like 90% have done the testing. Water system does not need to go into the facility but rather provide a sample bottle and instructions. If the facility denies, the EPA rule requires that the system try at least twice and that meets the intent of the rule. Amy noted that since they're licensed, it is unlikely that they'll decline to test.

- Need replacement plans if unknown service lines are identified (about 88 systems currently) or galvanized requiring replacement (GRR) – 1 system in process of updating. Plans and PN requirements are very complicated – best to avoid. Discussion on connector terminology. Lacey asked about backflow devices with lead. It may be that it is an irrigation device not meant for drinking water.
- Systems will need to submit sample siting plan and later will need non-lead validation. DWS is just starting to sort through these requirements. There will be 5 tiers.
- Regionalization and Consolidation, Sue Yellowtail, DWS Small Systems Specialist
 - Kari asked what water systems would see as a barrier. Jessica: Capital costs, IGAs. Lacey also noted similar items, needing to bring their infrastructure up to City's standards. Mike Masters: Want to serve that part of the community, separate IGAs, annexation and red tape can come into play.
- Action Items and next steps:
 - DWS to share pdfs of all presentations.
 - Next meeting: July 15th
 - Suggested agenda items? None at this time.