



Meeting Notes
Drinking Water Advisory Group
June 2, 2025

Agenda Item	Notes
2. ODW Updates Holly Myers, Office Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Still under a tight budget, including hiring freeze and travel restrictions.<ul style="list-style-type: none">We have been able to hire a few staff in specific positions due to funding sources.Interlocal agreement with Squaxin Island Tribe.<ul style="list-style-type: none">We are very close to finalizing the agreement with the Tribe as we needed to wait until we finished our MOU with Ecology.We are partnering with several agencies, including Ecology and Dept of Ag as we continue working on nitrates in the GWMA area of the Lower Yakima Valley.ODW Reorganization<ul style="list-style-type: none">We are losing two manager positions (NWRO Regional Manager and Brad Burnham, Policy and Planning Manager).We are reorganizing into One ODW, with no regions, but teams and work remain the same.We will work toward standardized processes across the state.All emails and phone numbers stay the same.Currently working on a statewide map that is not broken down by regions.The management change happens on July 1, but some things may take a little longer to implement.If you find that you are trying to contact someone or don't know who to contact, please reach out and we will connect you. <p>Questions</p> <p>Q: How will the agreement with the Squaxin Island Tribe work on timing? A: Should not hold things back and we encourage you to bring any Tribe, Ecology, and others in, early in the process. Per Regina Grimm (comment): "We have been including the Squaxin tribe for a few years now. They are sent a copy of the document at the time it is received. So, it shouldn't impact the timeline."</p> <p>Q: How does the reorg affect the work of staff? A: Should not affect the work itself, but we will be working to get things more streamlined and standardized processes across the state.</p> <p>Q: Is any of this reorg being driven by the federal budget? A: Not this reorg. We will have a federal budget update later in this meeting.</p>
3. Legislative Updates Brad Burnham, Policy and Planning Section Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Session is over.Brad will move to another position in DOH on July 1.Budget was signed on May 20 with a few vetoes.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Now that the session is over and bills are signed, we are working on implementation plans. This includes:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reviewing what we need to do in ODW.May include looking at our rules too.HB1064 affects our work with SYNC. The sunset date was set for June 30, 2025. This bill takes the date out, so we continue working on it.HB1947 relates to SMAs on the requirements for new Group B systems.HB1615 relates to using a default number of people that determines whether the system is a Group A or Group B. We may have to do some rulemaking for this one.
4. PFAS Rules and Updates Katitza Holthaus, Division Regulator Affairs Manager; and Brad Burnham, Policy and Planning Section Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ODW has been working with the State Board of Health (SBOH) over the last few years, including emergency rulemaking.Just had a Rule Hearing last week about the Exception Rulemaking. No verbal testimony but did have two emailed statements. One was concerned about the action levels going back and forth between working on the rule and implementing it. The other email was concerned about how EPA's decisions will affect this.<ul style="list-style-type: none">It may be approved as soon as June 11 and it could go into affect 31 days later. If not, then it will specifically say when it would go into affect.SBOH just opened informal comment period about the Permanent Rulemaking. Due on June 11 by midnight.EPA recently announced that it will keep the MCL for PFOA and PFOS. We continue to work on everything on our end. Remember that we can be more stringent than the Feds, but we can't be less.Can also receive GovDelivery listserv ODW rulemaking updates at: Washington State Department of HealthQuestions about PFAS can be sent to Mike Means. <p>Questions</p> <p>Q: Where can I confirm EPA proposed MCLs?</p> <p>A: Here's the link to our website: PFAS in Drinking Water—Group A Public Water System Support. Also, we have a two-page document that you can review: Final two-pager PFAS Permanent Rule</p>
5. Federal State Status Regulations and Infrastructure Funding Kay Rottell, Deputy Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lead and Copper Rule Improvement (LCRI). Due to the rule being open for PFAS, we can't open it for LCRI nor for CCRs.<ul style="list-style-type: none">There are some legal challenges for this, due to costs, access to privately owned service lines, and the ten-year replacement deadline.We are going to open our Fees and possibly increasing them as we have not increased them in about 20 years.State and Federal Funding:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Previously, funding came from General Fund State, Fee Accounts, and Federal Funds (PWSS and SRF/BIL).



- Thirty-one (31) percent of the DWSRF grant (and BIL) is used as Set Asides that funds ODW staff, several contracts, an audit, technical assistance, and several other items.
- We also get smaller funds for FPHS, Alternative Water, Nitrate Mitigation Plan, Wellhead Protection, and the WIIN Grants.
- As we move into the 2025-27 Biennium, we will have funding from the Fee Accounts and Federal Funds (PWSS and SRF/BIL) and some smaller specific funding continues alternative water, nitrate mitigation plan, and WIIN.
- State funding challenges are that we have no GFS support and fees are not covering costs
- There are lots of things going on at the federal level right now and we still don't have confirmation on all that funding, so we are at a spot where we are unsure what our final funding will look like.

Questions

Q: (Tom Jensen) Any Funding for quarterly PFAS testing?

A: My understanding is that if the quarterly monitoring is for **initial quarterly, yes**, you can qualify. For increased quarterly due to detections where the samples are also not required for initial quarterly to meet the federal funding, no. **Sophia's chat response:** Tom, please reach out to Jeff Roeser regarding monitoring and Brietta for systems with results above an MCL. We do have funding sources to help mitigate for PFAS above an MCL to support PWSs prior to the due date for PFAS compliance under the federal rule, whether that date is in 2029 or changes to 2031. **From Derrick Dennis in chat:** If you had a system that was signed up for Free PFAS Testing in 2024, we approved all of those systems to be sampled in 2025. If you have systems that still need to sample and you would like them considered, please sign up online at [Department of Health, Office of Drinking Water PFAS Free Sampling Enrollment Form](#). PLEASE NOTE: this is only for initial monitoring and only for COMM and NTNC systems who have not yet met their initial monitoring. Please advise systems/operators/owners of the restrictions when discussing this opportunity. Each system has to be reviewed for eligibility and to determine sampling schedules which takes time and if folks submit requests for systems that are not eligible, we still have to review them to find that out. Thank you.

Q: What does WIFA stand for?

A: Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act.

6. [Coordinated Water System Plans Discussion and Breakout Sessions](#)

Brian Sayrs, Principal Planner

- 💧 Last year, we got input for the Capacity Development Strategy and it brought up some barriers to capacity development, but there were also some incentives for it.
- 💧 FPHS is across the U.S. For Washington state, the Legislature designated money for it. We work to distribute the money in multiple ways.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One update was the Water Use Efficiency Guidebook (331-375). We updated it in electronic format, so that you can now click on links and go directly to those resources. ○ We are looking at putting together a toolbox for land use planners. ◆ Two questions from Brian for the breakout rooms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What do your local governments and their planning departments need to understand about drinking water in your service area? ○ What topics would you like to collaborate on? ◆ SAJB = Spokane Aquifer Joint Board <p>Questions</p> <p>Q: Could we start getting CEUs for DWAG, WWUC, RAC, and other meetings as that might get more folks at these meetings? A: Have started to look into this for several things but will still need additional research.</p>
<p>7. LHJ Drinking Water Model Update and Breakout Sessions Ingrid Salmon, Local Water Programs Advisor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Some things we can help with are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local Water Programs Advisor. ○ Assisted Self-Assessment. ○ Water Core Team Consultation. ○ Partner Hub. ◆ She has created the first edition of the Model Local Drinking Water Program. Recommends that those LHJs that don't have their own Group B program to take a look at the guidance and to join the program to see how they can grow their program. ◆ Drinking Water Foundational Public Health Washington State Department of Health
<p>8. Agenda Ideas for next Meeting John Freitag</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Final Water Affordability Advisory Committee Report (Chris Pettit) ◆ Federal Funding Updates ◆ DWSRF Guidelines (Chris/Jocelyne)

Breakout Room Discussions: Questions A & B

[FPHS Discussion Questions \(PDF\)](#)

Room 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ How planning can help define priority service in our urban growth areas. Smaller systems, maybe one-offs, have a hard time finding who should be serving them. Thurston often has service areas, but more info on who second or third in line would be beneficial. ◆ Pierce county (Jeff Johnson), regional coop. The county gives notice of county road projects, three-year window to try and incorporate improvements at the same time. Not as good with sewer. ◆ Challenges, landscape irrigation requirements can make it easier. Requirements for water utility sites, landscape requirements can create visual barriers to ensure well sites are safe.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Water use efficiency. Customers use low water in home, high use in landscaping. Can use help with zoning. They have to have green grass, need help with bilaws to limit the area needing irrigation.Could actively pursue updating coordinated water system plans with counties.Pierce County. Fencing and gate requirements. Entry way fence needs 60 ft back from road, can be problematic on smaller sites.Middle housing or ADU's infrastructure improvements for fire protection. How is that supposed to be funded? I.e. Fire hydrant in a culdesac is OK until extra ADU's are put in, who funds it?Eastsound Water on Orcas Island in the San Juan County - We managed four water systems with the 3 contracted O&M. We have our own water system plans approved last year, two other water systems are in process of updating and getting their WSP approved in the DOH.I like the idea of a combined workforce and standardization of WUE calculations, reporting, leak detection among the county will be really helpful.For irrigation use of water during the summer, or extra storage for emergencies, what about a study among the water systems to apply for a grant as a whole to review building storage tanks to be shared.
Room 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">What do your local governments, and their planning departments, need to understand about drinking water in your service area?<ul style="list-style-type: none">Need to understand everything. Seems there is a denial to understand.Infill/ADUs is one of biggest concerns and water quality issues related to dead end lines.Water Rights are a concern – not able to transfer them easily from other systems.Aging infrastructure and no funds.Could help:<ul style="list-style-type: none">If there were some example ordinances developed to share.Work with/put pressure on Ecology to better serve public health. Maybe even include Commerce to help solve problems with multiple/overlapping water systems.
Room 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Water resources issues.Regionalization.Consolidations.Multi-faceted projects and SYNC.
Room 4	<p>Question A</p> <p>What do your local governments and their planning departments need to understand about drinking water in your service area? Consider: What do they do that makes your job harder? What could they do that would make your job easier?</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Erin Hennings (utilities engineer for navy) - fed employee, doesn't get involved much in local gov. Turnover in employees and experience, people don't know they need to reach out to utilities - making connections correctly. Comes back to experience and knowledge.◆ Tammy (commissioner for water district) - ADU's need an additional water hookup. Local gov doesn't know that ADU's require an additional hookup, in some areas hookups are limited. If they start allowing ADU's - lots available limits the number of hookups.◆ Stephanie Ober - Skamania Public Health (EH) - generalist, high learning curve, ODW support to LHJ has been incredible. Some areas wanting to build ADU with enough space, but once health dept allows so many hookups, limited in the hookups in the future. 5000 gal per day <p>Question B</p> <p>What topics would you like to collaborate on with other water systems? Consider: Source water protection, New source development, Emergency response, Water rights, Local financing, Sharing operators, Growth management, Consumer engagement, Shared services and consolidation, Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Erin Hennings - emergency response, power outage, disruption of services, shared resources - mobile disinfection or interties with other water systems. Emergency response to collaborate with other water systems.◆ Tammy - planning depts need to look at where wellheads are before subdividing property
Room 5	<p>Session One: What do your local governments and their planning departments need to understand about drinking water in your service area?</p> <p>Abdoul: City of Renton struggling HB ADUs and Middle Housing - how do city develop a consistent way to develop meters ADUs and middle housing - impacting ERUs for system planning? Working with SPU purveyors group to develop a consistent approach.</p> <p>Mike Wolanek: Arlington—part of coordinated water systems plan—don't have a lot of conflict. Sets things up easy for boundary conditions. What is not clear? They are not part of a regional system though have an intertie to Snohomish PUD. A number of midsize systems trying to develop their own sources. How that develops—would want water to be kept in a basin. North Snohomish in a good position on this. In terms of water rights conflicts—there are lots of obstacles to overcome. For regional, integrated systems, the disadvantages of this structure could be addressed.</p> <p>Sarah Spotts: from a large utility perspective, room for improvement on their planning work. Integration with County—with Hurst decision—Whatcom County council just approved their Coordinated Water Systems Plan Update—does this address drought</p>



	<p>What topics would you like to collaborate on with other water systems?</p> <p>Helpful to address. sustainability, rates of growth, need to address.</p> <p>No further ideas.</p>
Room 6	<p>Question A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Recognize the existence of water systems. paving/water mains. Project management across agencies.Provide transportation project planning well in advance. This can be a problem even within agencies.Island county comprehensive plan: local planners don't seem to understand capacity limits and the expense involved. Proliferation of Group B systems. They're planning on more Group A's, but there's no reality to it. Feels pointless.It feels like they're doing it to get it over with. We need subgroup meetings. <p>Question B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Group B's adjacent to each other. They need consolidation.But, this is the golden question. if those Group B's were consolidated. new ecology interpretation--municipal requires water right.Colorado: Utilities engineers met quarterly. training programs, sharing operators. emergency response.
Room 7	<p>Question A: What do your local governments and their planning departments need to understand about drinking water in your service area?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Water rights - Water right issues are challenges, especially with new ADUs. More information for local gov about how water rights work from ECY and how they work with other requirements.Communication between groups –<ul style="list-style-type: none">In Spokane county, the county is keeper of coordinated plan and they are updating it. Spokane and Liberty are the only municipally owned. Most are smaller systems and irrigation districts. They are interested in adding goals in the coordinated plan.Funding is especially a challenge for coordination, especially for smaller systems.Spokane is trying to do swaps with the Growth management area and are trying to use the coordinated plan to help with this – but has not been used for this before.Would changes to WACs or RCWs help?In Spokane larger area, there is an aquifer shared with Canada and many systems coordinate with separate organization that includes the county.Adding WUE to the coordinated plan? (would that be appropriate? Maybe not because their plans are unique to them).An executive board is part of Spokane's work now and it is helpful. It is made up of water systems.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The HSB? (regional resource) is the best place for sharing that he has seen. It might be difficult to regulate and require certain levels of sharing and coordination.○ In Pierce, there is similar cross organization coordination for planning. If those groups do not exist then it is more challenging.○ Not all counties have the sharing mechanisms in place. It can be costly to implement these mechanisms – so funding would be helpful.○ Coordination Act and housing overlaps and conflicts are challenging. So, they have good coordination in Pierce Co. Other counties may not have the resources.
Some additional notes from Holly.	<p>Sharing a few notes: Planning depts need more awareness and education on water rights, impacts related to subdivision and development, important to have organizations that bring partners together (Spokane Aquifer Joint Board, Pierce Co Coop, Spokane Co board). Small systems are less likely to have CWSP and routine meeting organizations due to funding restrictions.</p> <p>Holly's follow-up question: Is there additional need to meet with smaller systems?</p>

Breakout Room Discussions: Question C

Room 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">💧 In Spokane –<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ They understand that they have an operating permit, which has required testing.○ They have had to share information about cross connection control program. Long time the county was issuing permits without CCCP review and that caused problems, occasionally. So, it would be good for counties to know that the CCCP is under their prevue and not theirs.○ Underground injection control – this communication is going better thanks to new stormwater plan.💧 In Tacoma Pierce<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ It is fairly good communication and understanding both ways.○ Well head protection area is a topic that could use better communication and coordination.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ High hazard contaminant letter goes out each year. This is an important tool.💧 City of Auburn<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ For permitting, including source water ownership for properties. Trying to get this information more accessible. Send out letter to owners about contaminant risks and measures to help.○ CCCP – they have their own team and guidelines.💧 Coordination is always the key.
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Room 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">💧 PUD: People putting in ADUs and there's an additional water connection. LHJ: we have no control over the future. DOH: ERUs can be recalculated based on ADUs💧 LHJs and water systems need to understand demands in different medical facilities.
Room 5	<p>Hurst fix – resulted in a blank check for the proliferation of permit exempt wells. E.g. – case where an application for water rights denied resulted in around 300 new permit exempt wells; Mike Wolanek from Arlington - Group Bs are better than permit exempt.</p> <p>Public utilities on committee - he's a big advocate for one water concept. Was not maintained concept. One Health Collaboration. - drinking water had not part in that - missed opportunity. This could be an advantage for that.</p> <p>Mike Wolanek e.g. maintaining your septic is a good thing. Is there a way to get to One Health.</p> <p>Abdoul - Maplewood - small water system - private wells, next to river, all on septic. Have an approved plan. There has not been a mechanism to get them off their septic.</p> <p>My summary of comments for Session Two Hurst fix resulted in proliferation of permit exempt well. Not so great. 1. Does drinking water have a role in One Health initiative at DOH 2. Small water system with all septic right on river. Is there a way to force them off septic?</p>
Room 4	<p>What does your local health jurisdiction need to understand about drinking water in your county? Consider: What role (or roles) should your local health jurisdiction fill? Are there specific drinking water issues they should be working on in your county? How can they best advocate for you?</p> <p>Allowing septic systems within designated public well areas. 31 septic systems within 200' of public wells. 200' is minimum in WAC.</p>
Room 2: What does your local health jurisdiction need to understand about drinking water in your county?	<p>If we want a say at the table - need to be more involved. Ten years planning is not adequate – need to have bigger picture long term/ultimate goals. DOH and Ecology play an important part because of their rules. Local jurisdictions need to be more involved and take action. Lots of talk and no action. Need to involve systems in the planning - Growth Management etc.</p>