



Meeting Notes
Drinking Water Advisory Group
September 8, 2025

Agenda Item	Notes
2. ODW Updates Holly Myers, Director of ODW	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ We lost two of our upper-level managers on July 1: Brad Burnham, Policy and Planning section manager, and the vacant NWRO manager.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ We reorganized and became One ODW instead of regional offices.○ You still work with the same people in our office. Programs haven't changed and neither have phone numbers or emails.◆ Squaxin Island Tribe MOU is being worked on as we have finished the MOU with ECY.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Related to the ECY-DOH-MOU-Signed.pdf.
3. PFAS Updates Mike Means, Water Quality, Policy, and Certification Manager	<p>Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Most water systems have sampled for PFAS and many others are set to take their samples.◆ We will follow the EPA rules by adoption.◆ Waiting to see what EPA will do to adopt the rule.◆ The formal comment period for the State Board of Health<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Katitza (in chat): The Board's PFAS formal comment period will start in early October. DOH and the Board are still working on the CR-102 documents.◆ For those who are sampling right now and looking at their schedule, there may be some glitches if there has been a change to the WFI.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Sophia (in chat): For PWSs that are >3,300 population, the PFAS requirements are erased when WFI is updated. <p>Questions: None</p>
4. Final Water Affordability Advisory Committee Report Chris Pettit, DWSRF Program Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ The Washington State Legislature called for a study to answer a budget proviso, so this report is the culmination of what was discovered.◆ This study brought many people together from state, counties, locals, utilities, WSU, etc. to work together to see what the affordability of water rates are in this state and how to help.◆ Recommendations include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Need to have a continuous data collections.○ This bill is based on HB 1690.○ Affordable Housing.○ How to phase in LIHWAP and how to figure out how there might be ways to cover drinking water as many utilities include both water and wastewater in their bill.○ It is in the final review stage right now. Once it goes to the legislature and finalized, it will be out for others to see it.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Utility taxes are discussed in the report.○ Seeing lots of impact on affordability across the board. <p>Questions</p> <p>Q: Jeff Johnson (external): Does this cover the costs for things, such as PFAS treatment? A: Yes, that has been discussed and is one that they took into consideration.</p>
<p>5. DWSRF Guidelines Chris Pettit, DWSRF Program Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Next due date is November 30.◆ Working on the Guidelines and this year's big push was to focus on being consistent across the board.◆ Comments on Guidelines are due by September 19.◆ Website: Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF). Draft Guidelines are linked at the bottom of the page.◆ The big update for planning and engineering guidelines is we are now using set asides to give grants to help systems with their planning.◆ Updating the guidelines to clearly differentiate the funding, where it comes from, and what it can be used for.◆ We are still getting applications/inquiries of systems that are on the cusp of whether they are considered disadvantaged.◆ We are looking at what we can do to help Group B's and individuals that have issues involving PFAS.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ We may be able to now use our Emerging Contaminant Small and Disadvantage Community funds along with our Alternative Drinking Water funds. <p>Questions: None</p>
<p>6. Federal/State Funding Updates Kay Rottell, Deputy Director and Chris Pettit, DWSRF Program Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ We did get a new state revenue forecast and it doesn't look good, but ODW doesn't rely on general state funds. The only program that does is the Alternative Drinking Water funding.◆ We received our federal fiscal year (FFY) 2025 Public Water System Supervision (PWSS) funding and FFY24 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Supplemental and Emerging Contaminants. We are waiting for our FFY 2025 DWSRF base grant award.◆ DOH is preparing and setting up a readiness group for a possible federal shutdown.◆ Continue to work on the fee updates and when that gets further down the process, it will be shared with others.◆ From Susan Saffery (in chat): President's budget also essentially defunds Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA), but the House budget fully funds and the Senate budget takes a modest cut. <p>Questions: None</p>



7. WUE Discussion

Mike Means, Water
Quality, Policy, and
Certification Manager

- ◆ Thank you to all those who answered questions for the Ruckelshaus Center. Link to the assessment: [Situation-Assessment-Washingtons-Municipal-Water-Efficiency-Statute-Final-Draft.pdf](#)
- ◆ John Weidenfeller thanks Chris and our contracts staff for the funding that they've gotten. They are looking at needing to raise their monthly rate for each connection as they need to pay for the continual care and running of the PFAS treatment and even the testing that needs to be done.
- ◆ Susan Saffery: Seems like Water Use Efficiency (WUE) funding should come from the state level. We know that the federal and state funding is being hit hard right now, so it may be hard right now to ask for more funding. Understand that there are challenges right now on the limits that everyone has.
- ◆ Nikki Guillot: It may be good to zoom out further and include other issues such as nitrate. For WUE, coordination is very important across the board to get more efficient and to use the funding more wisely.
- ◆ Jeff Johnson (external): Their lawyer had found a difference in the water system plan review between ECY and ODW. They found that ECY was going to lower the number of connections.
ODW Response: We don't know exactly what system this comment is referring to. ODW knows that we are dealing with one system where ECY let us know they do not physically have the water available to provide. We required the water system to provide a capacity analysis to evaluate the number of connections they can serve.
- ◆ John Roth (Clark): Coordinating around exempt wells. Sometimes these are obstacles with ECY and it would be great to make sure ECY knows how important consolidations are for drinking water systems.
- ◆ Lori Blau (in chat): Some watersheds are overallocated as well.
- ◆ Dan Sander: *(Couldn't hear him, even when he was unmuted. He never put anything in the chat.)*
- ◆ Muni Water Law is to provide water, but to do it efficiently.
- ◆ Mike Dexel (in chat): On the topic of WUE and the statutory reference: (2) The effect of DOH's approval of a planning or engineering document that describes a municipal water supplier's service area under chapter 43.20 RCW, or the local legislative authority's approval of service area boundaries in accordance with procedures adopted pursuant to chapter 70.116 RCW, is that the place of use of a surface water right or ground water right used by the supplier includes any portion of the approved service area that was not previously within the place of use for the water right if the supplier is in compliance with the terms of the water system plan or small water system management program, including those regarding water conservation.

Questions: None



<p>8. Challenges and Issues Facing Public Utilities Open Discussion</p> <p>Mike Means, Water Quality, Policy, and Certification Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Susan Saffery: Hearing through WWUC about the reorg and how it is affecting those at the local level.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ For the utilities and local level, you are still working with the same people, but they may have a different supervisor.○ For higher level work, such as policy, we lost Brad Burnham, so we are working thru how we handle policy. We have multiple staff who deal with policy but still need to figure out the coordination.○ We are working on how we can cross-train between staff positions, so that staff have backups and others who can help lift each other up. We have people who feel that they can't take a vacation.○ We are still in a travel freeze and we don't know how long that will be happening.○ Are there other ways that you can meet?◆ John Weidenfeller: Fluoride. Haven't heard anything recently.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The Board talked about it recently and you should be able go on their site and look at their minutes.◆ John Lovie: LAMIRD (Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development). Working with Chris and Jocelyne about the possibility of doing some consolidations. They are looking at over \$4M loan, but only about 175 people. Trying to get more folks to join in. Also, look at SMAs and how they can be successful in our state. We do have financial capacity training scheduled for all of our planners/engineers in the coming months.◆ Joanne (in chat): please address naturally occurring things in basalt wells, possibly released after oxidation and also address instream flows.◆ Burt Clothier: I'd like to have some discussions not just on the current system planning for small Group A systems but also the future planning considering the municipal law updates to help protect them against themselves in meeting future needs.◆ Meade Brown Jr.: To follow up with John Lovie's discussion. Lots of people are complaining about the rates and there is nothing to back them with the rules or regulations. We can't change what has been done in the past, but we can change what happens in the future.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Must assess the needs and how to pay back loans.○ We know that lots of people don't want to pay any more for their water, so how do you convince folks to be ok with the increase. <p>Questions</p> <p>Q: Heather Kortuem (in chat): Can a contract operator operate anything requiring an SMA? A: If an SMA is required, then it needs to be an SMA. We are looking at our SMA program and how we can get contract operators to become SMAs.</p>
<p>9. WFI and Population Change Impacts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ How do we count the transient population?◆ Heather Kortuem: Does this transient population have anything to do with AirBnBs? Not that we know, but might fall under tourism.



Mike Means, Water
Quality, Policy, and
Certification Manager
and Brian Wilson, WFI
Coordinator

- If you have 20 people in a home all weekend, it is still listed as one connection.
- Link to the State of Washington Tourism: [Data & Research—State of Washington Tourism](#)
- ◆ We are looking at population estimates and breaking them down by population, visitors, and commuters.
 - We have a map that people can look at, which includes the numbers that we have in Sentry, but we would like for people to help us get more accurate numbers.
 - What makes sense to people to get answers on these?
 - Should it be in the budget cycle?
 - From Sophia (in chat): CCRs will now be based on population when the new CCR rule becomes effective in 2027. Link to EPA's info on the revisions: [Consumer Confidence Report Rule Revisions | US EPA](#).
 - More money would rarely be the answer.
 - Having the numbers within the first few months of the year would be helpful.
 - Jeff Johnson (external): making sure that the students aren't counted twice in the population.
 - Deborah Johnson (in chat): Not to pick on anyone, but because I happen to know of this one. This is the entire portion of Leavenworth's WSP about tourism:
 - 1.2.3 Tourism is a substantial component of the local economy in Leavenworth. Sources estimate that up to 2,000,000 people visit Leavenworth annually and that some festival weekends attract as many as 60,000 tourists. As a result, water use by businesses can vary substantially with tourism peaks. These large variations in water use necessitate vigilant observation of water demand conditions by water treatment plant operators.
 - This is framed as "overtourism" in the current comprehensive plan (being updated for 2026), in relation to "traffic, housing costs, parking, overcrowding of the river and sidewalk, etc." & "[steps taken] to improve transportation, housing & developing new partnerships with agencies, organization & other groups, so that Leavenworth can survive again." But there seems to be no recognition of related utilities needs. It's almost like the earlier conversation about people not expecting to have to pay for water: turn on the tap & it flows (& the corollary, flush & it goes).
- ◆ From Kay: Going to first look at the ones with over 100 connections and have non-residential connections.
- ◆ From Sophia: If you're less than 180 days a year, the population would only be a TNC pop. So, for work from home, would it depend on whether folks were visiting the PWSs greater than or less than 180 days a year.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">John Roth: Doesn't see the "commuter" on the WFI.<ul style="list-style-type: none">This is in 32A of the WFI.Tourists are in 31A.Lynn Kirby: Is the tool available now or is there an estimate of when it will be available?This tool is to help you get more accurate numbers for the WFI.Amie Smith: Time frame for notice for systems to implement and budget for changes – two to three years.For Holly: We rely on systems using tools to report an accurate as possible using the same tools available to everyone.Grace Gottlieb: Regarding the WFI, there are events increased in the San Juan Islands post COVID. As a SMA, we can estimate and manage the demand of consumption but regarding the number of visitors, we have no information unless we have a very cooperative organizer providing the number of registrants or local restaurant owners who will be willing to share the number of people they served within a month. In addition, the visitors will travel across the few systems we manage, it is not quite easy to measure the accurate numbers on visitors. We don't even have much help from the local Dept of Commerce. <p>Questions</p> <p>Q: Lynn Kirby (in chat): How does this account for "work from home" commuters (where sometimes they are in the office and sometimes work from home)? A: This gets a little tricky. Brian will look more into this scenario.</p> <p>Q: Lynn Kirby (in chat): So, a person that lives in this area gets counted twice? Once for Wenatchee as a resident, and once for the location they work. A: Yes, if they work in a service area of another public water system.</p>
<p>10. Agenda Ideas for next Meeting</p> <p>John Freitag</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Discussion not just on the current system planning for small Group A's, but also the future planning in light of the muni water law updates to help project them against themselves in meeting future needs.Greater focus on water systems establishing adequate rates. For example a recent sanitary survey did not even recommend a rate increase.Need to have discussion on funding for smaller systems.From Deborah, just for info:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Seeking Feedback About our GrantUnder the HEAL Act, we are conducting an Environmental Justice Assessment of the SWP Local Assistance Grant Program. We are looking for feedback about our grant guidelines, and how we can make our funding more accessible. <p>Survey</p> <p>We'd like feedback from public water systems, local governments, conservation groups, educational groups, tribal partners, and public</p>



utility customers. **The survey closes September 30. [Participate in our survey.](#)**

For Spanish, select from the drop-down menu in the upper left corner of the survey screen.

Listening Sessions

Listening Session 1: September 10, 2025, 9:30-11:00 a.m. (PST).[Register for Session 1.](#)

Listening Session 2: September 17, 2025, 6:00-7:30 p.m. (PST).[Register for Session 2.](#)

- ◆ Updates on the Wellhead Protection Publication 331-018. Idea emailed from Nikki Guillot to John and Mike after the meeting.