Office of Drinking Water
Department of Health

Meeting Notes
Drinking Water Advisory Group
September 14, 2026

Agenda Item	Notes

2. ODW Updates
Mike Means, Water Quality, Policy, and Certification Manager
	♦ Upcoming recruitments:
	  ○ Surface Water Engineer under Engineering and Technical Services group.
	  ○ WFI Public Health Advisor.
	  ○ Water Policy Planner.
	♦ Engineering and Planning teams are coordinating well, statewide.
	♦ Water quality team preparing for upcoming rules and developing statewide implementation for PFAS and LCRI rules.
	♦ ODW Employee Engagement Pulse Survey shows improvement from 2023 and room for growth. ODW Management Team commits to focus on the following.
	  ○ Leadership Responsiveness and Trust.
	  ○ Employee Burnout.
	  ○ Emergency Response Training.
	♦ Continuing to build standardized processes and invite water system partners to provide input on ways to improve.
	  ○ Thanks to those that already provided feedback.
	♦ Lots of changes in the agency, near the end of the layoffs due to budget reductions.
	  ○ Lost one ODW staff member due to legislative cuts and gained three from layoff options for those bumping into vacant positions.
	♦ Out of State work policy updated. DOH will no longer allow employees to work outside of Washington, Oregon, or Idaho. No impact to ODW.
	♦ Travel freeze remains in effect for non-essential travel, but we commit to continuing staff present at conferences like ERWoW and IACC.

3. Overview of HB 1906
Mike Means, Water Quality, Policy, and Certification Manager
	♦ This bill Impacts private for-profit utilities and UTC the most.
	♦ Outlined legislative intent elements that impact ODW listed below:
	  ○ Acknowledges that water systems are a critical service.
	  ○ Requires comprehensive planning in capital investments.
	  ○ Rate setting guidance and info shared with rate payers.
	  ○ Recognizes impact of increasing number of small failing systems.
	  ○ Makes statement that consolidations are a preferred alternative.
	  ○ Establishes that consolidations require active state support through TMF assistance.
	  ○ Restates that public water systems need to provide plans and engineering designs as required by ODW.

	• Bill also requires public notification prior to any change of ownership minimum of 90 days prior to change. • Requires UTC to verify that public notification has happened. • Additional requirements for UTC – rule adoption and proposal for multi-year rate plans (all for private for-profit entities). **Comment from Jeff Johnson RWCPC** – Representative Tharinger has a small water system in his district that was taken over by another utility and they dramatically increased rates—this was the impetus for this bill.

4. LCRI Updates – Two-Point Verification Requirements
Matt Hadorn, Lead and Copper Rule Policy
	• Reminder when using physical identification of lead pipes you need two visual points of inspection (this is required).
	  ○ Can be done when line is exposed at the meter.
	Publication and Guidance Documents Updates.
	• 1. *Lead Service Line Inventory Guidance* 331-711 (PDF)
	  ○ Updates include information identifying service line connector materials—no longer optional but is now required.
	  ○ Due 11/1/2027.
	• 2. *Statistical Analysis Guidance for Lead Service Line Inventory* 331-723 (PDF)
	  ○ Provides clearer guidance on statistical analysis.
	  ○ Recommend checking to make sure previous statistical analysis still meets updated requirements.
	• 3. *Employee Knowledge of Service Line Material Certification Form* 331-803 (Word)
	  ○ Employee knowledge of service line material is now included as alternative methods for verifying service lines.
	• 4. New LCRI FAQ link here: *Lead and Copper Rule Improvements Frequently Asked Questions* 331-804 (PDF)
	  ○ Working through implementation and listening to feedback. This FAQ includes answers to many questions we have received.
	  ○ Answers to questions and guidance on GRR, K-12 school requirements, funding opportunities, and more included in this FAQ.
	• EPA also provided new guidance documents referred to as "tips" – link to first here: LCRI Service Line Inventories Tips.
	  ○ Intended to provide clearer guidance on GRR.
	• Second document is EPA tips on determining water system access and conducting full-service line replacement LCRI Service Line Replacement Access Tips.
	• Both EPA guidance docs were just published last month.
	• Lead Copper Rule is formally adopted by reference into state code.
	  ○ Exclusion we opted not to include in our statement requirements (WAC 246-290-025) follows:

	▪ New small water system flexibility options (point of use treatment to remediate when exceeding action level) is excluded from state rule. ♦ Future updates at next DWAG or in upcoming communications (ODW Now newsletter, email bulletin, etc.) ♦ We will provide notice to water systems when we have primacy. ♦ EPA is conducting compliance and enforcement currently, but we will very soon apply for primacy to take this over, and we will let water systems know. ♦ Once we have primacy we expect to have clear guidance on K-12 and childcare facilities requirements. ♦ If we extend waivers, it will not exempt water systems from creating list of all facilities served by their distribution system. **Comment from Mike Means**—We are trying to find ways to develop the lists of K-12 schools and childcare facilities to make it as simple as possible for water systems to track. We are working with DCYF to give utilities starting points. **Q: Kim Bryant – Is there going to be any expectation for utilities to go back and verify connector material if they already completed their LSLI?** A: No, only going forward for new inventories. **Q: Elizabeth Raney: Thanks for the update on the LCRI. Was the exclusion for small water systems and POU treatment from 40 CFR 141.93?** A: Yes, the exclusion noted in WAC 246-290-025 is for CFR 141.93(c)(1) *Alternative compliance option: point-of-use devices.* **Q: Virpi Salo-Zieman: Will WA provide waivers for non-lead service line inventory validation step? When could we expect information and guidance on that?** A: We are working through guidance templates and will have those available soon. Inventory validation isn't due until 2034 for water systems, so this won't be a number one priority for systems. **Q: Doug Greenlund: Will there be guidance for how to identify private schools?** A: Yes, we are working with other state agencies and groups to help identify where these are located throughout the state to help systems determine if they are served by their distribution systems.
[5. ECSDC Opportunities](#) Tara Moore, Emerging Contaminants in Small	**Questions** **Q: Chris McMeen: A few comments: cyanotoxins, where present, are more impact full than low level Mn. Why this priority?**

or Disadvantaged Communities (EC-SDC) Grant Program Administrator	**A:** It's already under our existing structure. We haven't had any cyanotoxins come through. If systems are experiencing HABs impacts, please consider reaching out to source water protection program for potential funding. Source Water Protection Local Assistance Program webpage. **Q: Chris McMeen: Why not NTNC's?** A: NTNC's are eligible for funding. TNCs are eligible if in an area of concern.

6. ODW's Role in the Governor's WA Water Future
Holly Myers, ODW Director
	• Governor Ferguson directed Ecology to hold listening sessions for interest groups, tribes, and the general public.
	• DOH participated in June.
	• Themes include establishing shared statewide vision, understanding need to strengthen state family alignment, reframe statewide discussion from zero sum to shared outcomes.
	• Recognize that we are currently in zero sum framing (fish vs. farms vs. families). Need to move away from this and find shared solutions.
	• Major resource and implementation constraints, understand funding gaps.
	• Input already heard:
	  ○ Integrate across sectors.
	  ○ Find balance in stream and out of stream demands.
	  ○ Align?
	  ○ Strategic state family coordination to move from reactive to strategic.
	  ○ Use plans to their fullest
	  ○ Focus on science driven data.
	
	Comment from Jeff Johnson RWCPC:
	• Hearing a lot that is helpful but realistically minor in the big picture and won't make a big difference.
	• Process felt disjointed.
	• Commerce is looking for an accelerator for residential production. And looking at problems with 2030 and water rights.
	• Recommend water systems look at what Commerce is doing.
	• Discussion on reclaimed water was brought up by several people. Reclaimed water is a great idea, and considerations are cost per unit and viable customers.
	Comment from John Weidenfeller:
	• Thurston Co. doesn't have a water purveyor that can sell water. Would like to see solutions for that throughout the state for others that are in similar situations.
	  ○ Holly – this question was brought up multiple times and she encourages John to share this through the survey. Nothing is off the table.
	Q: Doug Greenlund: Regarding reclaimed water, water rights and in-stream flows were a barrier (at least in eastern WA) – is that still the case?
	A: Yes, but it's still an ongoing discussion.

- Part of the reason you didn't see a lot of state involvement was to allow people to come up with ideas without regulators there.
- Survey link to provide input here:
- Once Ecology has completed these sessions they will meet with agencies that have the most impact and/or overlap with the recommendations.
- ODW will keep DWAG informed.

Q: Nikki Guillot: Do you know if Ria Berns with Ecology is moving forward with the statewide water data hub concept she brought to the integrated climate action plan?
A: Holly doesn't know but will ask Ria as she meets with her frequently and follow up with Nikki.

Comment from John Roth - Washington Water Utility Council:

- There is a lot of work that could be followed up on – Water Use Efficiency, ASR, reclaimed and recycled water, Foster Taskforce, basin level planning.

Q: Holly Myers - Do you feel DOH should be involved in a different way and do you understand the reasoning for what our role has been? Please reach out to Holly if you aren't comfortable speaking up during this meeting.
A: John Roth – Washington Water Utility Council – it would be great to see all the agencies go in the same direction. Example – Ecology and Commerce's legislation to fast-track housing vs. DOH's perspective on planning ahead for this. Another example Hearst fix vs. Foster fix. Seems that not all agencies are seeing things from the same perspective.
A: Jeff Johnson, RWCPC—some groups are discussing more of a Hearst fix for water—basin planning rather than utility by utility basis.

The following is from state agency roundtable notes: Input on water resilient future and coordinated state response notes gathered from the roundtable include the following key points.

- Integrate across sectors by finding a way to balance in-stream and out-of-stream demands and meet the needs of people, ecosystems, agriculture and industry.
- Align statewide vision with regionally tailored implementation flexible to basin-level adaptation and innovation (like Yakima Basin and Salmon recovery efforts).
- Strategic state family coordination to address budget and capacity limits. Move beyond reactive approach to a coordinated funding and legislative strategy.
- Leverage and connect to existing tools by using existing authorities, plans, and program to their fullest.

	• Focus on science-driven data informed and adaptive policy and investment decisions. These should be guided by strong data, modeling and used to identify knowledge gaps. States should adapt to factors like climate shifts, seasonal extremes, and uncertainty seeking consistent, high-quality water supply and flood resilience.
7. ASR for Drinking Water-What We've Heard Jeff Johnson, Distribution, Treatment, and Groundwater Engineering Specialist	• Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR). • This is a program we collaborate with Ecology very closely on. Ecology is the primary lead. • Drinking Water is an important partner. • Looking at how the RCW can be changed. Draft of proposed rule changes are being reviewed. • Important tool in WA as a water resources tool, especially as our state grows and drought becomes more prevalent. • Indication that ASR is being taking seriously is evident in the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan agenda with Cities of Yakima, Prosser and others giving updates on ASR in their current projects. • Need for more ASR projects. • Injection water needs to be approved by DOH as a potable drinking water source. **Q: Nicole Grimm, ODW—Is there an estimate of the percent of the volume of water that can be extracted of the amount that was injected?** A: This is a great question for Ecology. They are definitely thinking about this and coming up with a proposed change to their process. **Q: Jeff Johnson – RWCPC - There were comments made many years ago about concerns about whatever water injected into ASR project cannot alter the pre-existing makeup or quality of the water in the aquifer. Has that been addressed?** A: The anti-degradation policy is seen by some as a roadblock for developing these projects. Changing the standard to drinking water MCLs and treatment techniques for microbial would be less restrictive but could result in a lower level of groundwater quality protection. **Q: Nikki Guillot - What about mobilizing contaminants or shifting existing plumes from clean-up sites?** A: Yes, this is something to consider as well.
8. Agenda Ideas for next Meeting John Freitag	• Continued updates on LCRI as available. • Presentation from Ecology on Washington Water Future (WWF) process. • Legislative updates (proposed changes to PWS definition update and others). • Drinking Water impacts from wildfire season.