



Meeting Notes  
Drinking Water Advisory Group  
December 6, 2021  
9:00 a.m. to 11:35 a.m.

| Agenda Item   | Notes  |
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| <p>2. Legislative Update<br/>Mike Means, Capacity Development and Policy Manager,<br/>Meeting Moderator</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ December packages to increase allotment since federal funds not all used, asking for that authority back to use the funds.</li><li>◆ New infrastructure funding quadruples normal match. Working with OFM and Leg alert. Will go forward about how best to meet needs. Will know more as we get closer.</li><li>◆ Number of topics continue to come up, PFAS funding or other concerns since rule is going forward. Effective Jan 1. Sampling program underway.</li><li>◆ Questions around funding for consolidation grants, etc. Another round of questions about other water quality issues.</li><li>◆ <b>Q.</b> Has ODW spoken about the L&amp;I issue with West Water and certification/pay level requirements? <b>A.</b> Bill Bernier spoke with L&amp;I, who says it's not happening here in Washington. Have seen it happen in Idaho. <b>Statement:</b> Citation issued here in WA to West Water. <b>Bill Bernier:</b> Please send us the information so we can follow up.</li></ul>  |
| <p>3. Review Summary<br/>Themes from DWAG<br/>Mike Means and Brian Sayers</p>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ <a href="#">Presentation.</a></li><li>◆ Highest concerns—pandemic impacts, workforce depletion, DW contaminant management.</li><li>◆ Customer disconnection, prioritize/continuity of operations; LHJ capacity, DW office unavailable; in-person activities; applicability of vaccine mandates (impacts across the board).</li><li>◆ Workforce depletion/OpCert/Training: Lack of operators, use of Operators In Training (OIT), how to utilize what's available.</li><li>◆ DW contaminant management: PFAS—initial and long-term costs, funding, replace temp systems, disposal, Group B systems.</li><li>◆ LCRR: EPA put on hold; reviewing comments and working toward final draft rule mid-December. Waiting to hear.</li><li>◆ UCMR education. How do utilities do that. Request: focus on Contaminant prevention, not just removal. Work with Department of Ecology.</li><li>◆ Other major themes:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Aging infrastructure.</li><li>○ Consumer engagement.</li><li>○ Emergency response.</li><li>○ Regionalization and consolidation.</li><li>○ Water rights.</li><li>○ Affordability.</li><li>○ Asset management,</li><li>○ Capacity development and Cross-Connection Control.</li><li>○ Environmental justice.</li></ul></li></ul> |



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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Public right-to-know.</li><li>○ Sanitary surveys.</li><li>○ SMAs.</li><li>○ Source water protection.</li><li>○ WUE.</li></ul>  |
| <p>4. Next Steps<br/>Feedback Requested—<br/>Prioritization,<br/>Information Sharing,<br/>Communication Needs<br/>Mike Means</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Will touch on some of these topics today and will include in future meetings. Will continue to check in and involve DW community.</li><li>◆ <b>Chris:</b> Infrastructure spending funds finally coming through, ensure applications have every component needed. Hope bottlenecks can be tackled so that funding isn't slowed or stopped.</li><li>◆ <b>Brian Sayrs:</b> Not always staff available that are needed.</li><li>◆ <b>Mike:</b> Are there enough construction and engineers that are needed? Enough contracting staff available? Enough American iron and steel?</li><li>◆ How do we share information and is it working for all of you? For instance, PFAS sampling funds available. Still hearing from systems that they didn't hear about it. Are there other tools to reach all of you?</li><li>◆ <b>Nick:</b> If you're outside of comms channels—email, Twitter—fewer snail mail going out. Doesn't reach those outside current comms channels.</li><li>◆ <b>Mike:</b> we have about 90 percent of valid emails.</li><li>◆ <b>David:</b> Agrees, it may take work on DOH's part. Sometimes a challenge to find which listserv to sign up for.</li><li>◆ <b>Heath City of Pasco:</b> problem with listservs. He misses some emails; peer gets twice as many. Missed out on the PFAS emails.</li><li>◆ <b>Mike:</b> we will post the PFAS email to the meeting webpage.</li><li>◆ <b>Comment:</b> operators may not see or respond to email. Old fashioned letters best way to reach aging operator population.</li></ul> |
| <p>5. Up[dates on New<br/>EPA Priorities<br/>Justice 40 Initiative<br/>Infrastructure Funding<br/>Lead Removal Funding<br/>PFAS Funding<br/>Corina Hayes and<br/>Mike Means</p> | <p><b>Corina</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ <b>Justice 40 Initiative:</b> 40% of federal benefits go to disadvantaged communities. Don't know metrics of evaluation, etc. We don't know what that means, still waiting for guidance. What they've talked about is that we'll use our existing definition of distressed communities. May be rule changes around subsidies.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Will discuss at a future meeting.</li></ul></li><li>◆ <b>Infrastructure Funding:</b> Capitalization grant increase, two other pots, lead removal and PFAS. Rules around capitalization funding will be the same as the SRF funding. Water rights requirements, etc. Likely increase in loan cycle. May put out different cycles in addition to fall construction loan cycle.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>Mike:</b> May spread out cycles for manageability and application processing. rules should be the same around PFAS and lead removal. Will discuss in future, probably separate cycles for clarity.</li><li>○ <b>Lead:</b> 49% forgivable, 51% as loans.</li><li>○ <b>PFAS:</b> 100% forgivable subsidy.</li></ul></li></ul>   |



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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>Question:</b> Since these are federal dollars, will all standard federal requirements be in play? <b>A:</b> Yes. One new condition that goes into effect in May, the “Buy America, Build America,” which changes using just U.S. steel to include all construction materials; broadens the effect with this funding.</li><li>○ <b>Question Jeff Johnson:</b> Spanaway using European meter company with a plant down south. How does that fall within requirement?<br/><b>Corina:</b> A lot of discussion going on. Not clear if there are exceptions or waivers. Supply chain issues complicate it. <b>Mike:</b> Waivers are up for discussion: blanket or specific waivers, how to establish them. Implications are significant. Will brainstorm for ideas. Working to get loans processed and get them rolling by May before requirements go into effect.</li><li>◆ <b>Mike, Justice 40:</b> One piece is 40% of benefit of any given project funding needs to support disadvantaged communities. Is it only small, rural communities? Or does it include large utilities with disadvantaged communities and projects directed at those communities.</li><li>◆ <b>Corina:</b> I think you covered that well. Need to define term. We currently use median income. Expect to receive guidelines.</li><li>◆ <b>Mike:</b> Current definition is; “Disadvantaged community means the service area of a proposed project within a public water system where the project will result in: (a) Water rates that are more than one and one-half percent of the MHI of the service area; or (b) Restructuring, when one or more public water systems are having financial difficulties.” This will be a significant expansion of this current definition. Curious to hear how you think we should do this.</li></ul> |
| <p>6. Brainstorming—<br/>defining and<br/>identifying concepts<br/>for disadvantaged<br/>communities<br/>Measuring success<br/>Discuss Benefit to<br/>Disadvantaged<br/>Communities<br/>Corina Hayes</p> | <p><b>Breakout into smaller rooms/teams.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ <b>Room 1:</b> More emphasis on tribal system; recognized and unrecognized tribes. Rural areas are disadvantaged more often. How to ID certain portion of a community, larger utilities may look at a portion of their customers. Other factors besides financial—technical, managerial, engineering capacity. Race and equity as additional factors. Traditional emphasis on looking at communities served.</li><li>◆ <b>Room 2:</b> A lot already touched on. Like to see funding go to proactive planning. Especially small, isolated, failing water systems—how to integrate into larger systems when geographically distanced. Private facilities (Peninsula Light Company) who are doing similar work; should we help fund that type of work.</li><li>◆ <b>Room 3:</b> Similar discussion of what might this look like if we consider different definitions. Should we include sewers and the associated costs. Post some links, will look and see what they offer. Discussion of the challenge to DW and to power utilities. Discussion of definition details, studies conducted, details of the process and how to make the assessment. <b>Nicholas:</b> Groups within relatively wealthy communities that</li></ul>  |



may still struggle to pay for services. Because of where they live, it's above fed poverty line. One of challenges to figure out if the approach to the definition is appropriate to that particular area. Mostly thinking of central Puget Sound region who struggle, but because of wage rates not defined as challenged. **Mike:** other studies where community members struggle, but utility doesn't qualify for aid. How do we address costs where utilities can't always qualify and help meet needs.

- ◆ **Room 4:** Talked about same things—criteria used and how to position or use metrics to meet the need. Larger utilities may not meet criteria, but communities within it may. Some larger utilities may provide water for smaller disadvantaged communities. Definition in terms of assistance, may look at an area, not just the system. How is it documented; how will it be written up? Water system determining info and sharing it. How can they demonstrate the need in write-up?
- ◆ **Room 5:** Spoke about same things—smaller geographic areas withing larger utility service area—how to address pockets. How some pockets don't have resources to even be heard, how to reach out so they are heard. In disadvantaged areas it may not be the main service, it may be the internal plumbing. Mobile home parks—interior plumbing outside utilities jurisdiction. How to help utilities plan for and take action on disadvantage community issues. Perhaps colleting info on payments plans or others struggling to pay bills. Maybe criteria in asset management plans can focus priorities to target particular communities. Planning grants to help utilities tell the story. Utilities take a lot of pride in sharing safe drinking water equality in customers, but may not be equity. Challenge remains.
- ◆ **Room 6:** MHI is so large and census tracks may not be small enough to capture subsets of disadvantaged communities. Silos of information; many tracking for different purposes; how to access that without breaching confidentiality for utilities to find those individuals/households. Section Eight housing program, school lunch programs, senior/disabled programs, metro access busses, subsidized housing, etc. AWWA presentations—Denver Water shining example. If you're paying more than 30% of income for housing, you should qualify. Scale too large, difficult to microscope down to where they are. Part B of restricting seemed really broad. Anymore guidance/criteria? **Dan:** community development through Commerce. Lunch program through schools might help. There's a whole list of folks to talk to. Trick is to develop list so individual utilities could know who to talk to.
  - Washington Tracking Network (WTN) map. Developed by zip code about health outcomes. Would be a great presentation to help DW understand and use to help find disadvantaged communities.
  - **Chris:** Superlative group, people with disabilities have much lower income, or no ability to earn as the rest of us do through limited



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|   | <p>capacity, etc. Veteran’s community also, a lot living with disabilities due to their service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What EPA’s direction is from the white house. Toolkit for utilities to support those in need.</li></ul>   |
| <p><b>7. Agenda Ideas for next Meeting</b><br/><b>Brian Sayrs</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lead and Copper Rule Revisions.</li><li>• Ecology allocation of water rights.</li><li>• PFAS testing funding: DOH sequencing requirements for different utilities.</li><li>• Manganese rule; where it comes from—biological activity that takes it into groundwater/drinking water. Lumber/mining.</li><li>• Email <a href="mailto:Brian.Sayrs@doh.wa.gov">Brian.Sayrs@doh.wa.gov</a> if you have any ideas.</li></ul> |