



## Meeting Notes

### Drinking Water Advisory Group

July 17, 2023

*Note: Presentations are linked on the agenda item title. Handouts are linked in the notes section.*

Agenda Item	Notes
<p><b>2. ODW Update</b> Holly Myers, Office Director</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ New staff.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ SWRO: New assistant regional manager, Regina Grimm; new planner Meredith Jones.</li> <li>○ New SRF manager, Chris Pettit; new SRF public health advisor Chelsea Cannard.</li> <li>○ NWRO new planner Christa Chavez.</li> <li>○ HQ Office Assistant, Eric Correia.</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ Facilities update. External partner meetings available via schedule/reservation. Reach out to <a href="#">local regional office staff</a>.</li> <li>◆ Interagency Climate Water Forum group. Agency representatives from Ecology, Department of Fish and Wildlife, and DOH. From DOH, Holly, Sheryl Howe, Hydrogeologist; Lauren Jenks, EPH Assistant Secretary; and Laura Johnson, Director of the Office of Environmental Public Health Sciences.</li> <li>◆ Foundational Public Health Services (FPHS) program. Working and communicating with LHJs and counties to identify and understand water use efficiency (WUE) and availability. The State Auditor’s Office conducted an audit of WUE. Create conservation across the state.</li> <li>◆ Lower Yakima Valley groundwater management area. With Ecology address nitrates in response to EPA requirements.</li> <li>◆ Working with Ecology on exempt wells drilled within PWS service areas. working with attorney generals to learn what authority we have. Possible future rule or policy changes. Mike Means working on it.</li> <li>◆ PFAS civil litigation against manufacturers assistant attorney general said document is very long, not well thought out. So can’t give out summary or talking points. PWs currently impacted will need to contact their own legal advice if they want to access the settlement funding. Other settlements and issues related to PFAS, may be our litigation, timing not known.</li> <li>◆ EPA issued an interpretative memo on cyber security. Working with external partners to meet requirement. At this time not mandated to incorporate those options into sanitary surveys. Will address issue in future with PWS.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>3. Disadvantaged Communities Discussion</u></b> Jocelyne Gray, DWSRF Environmental Engineer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <a href="#">Disadvantaged Community (DAC) Impact Matrix</a>, determines which communities are disadvantaged. It was developed last month, we want to get it out to communities that need it. Looks at criteria to determine; will make adjustments after rulemaking next year.</li> </ul>



- ◆ On DWSRF page, under “Disadvantaged Community” drop down. Matrix is linked under that entry.
- ◆ Link opens spreadsheet with four tables that have resource links to help you fill out the information.
- ◆ Disadvantaged is determined by a score. Need at least five points to be DAC.
- ◆ If federally recognized tribe within state, automatically disadvantaged.
- ◆ First link goes to Washington Tracking Network map.
  - Instructions are in the [linked presentation](#), also on the [DWAG Meetings webpage](#).
- ◆ New org chart for DWSRF included.

**Discussion**

**Doug Greenlund:** Using census data. How do you prorate if a water system doesn’t take up a whole census block? **Jocelyne:** if within, use numbers for entire census tract. If service area takes up more than one tract, use an average.

**Curt Brees:** I’d like the concept of a WS that has ten or more census tract nice to be considered for project and steering dollars needed into lower income communities. **Jocelyne:** Proposed projects in lower census tract can be targeted. If it’s a source that serves the whole water system then they’d look at the water system as a whole. **Mike Means:** Working with EPA and challenges with federal rules and how to implement program. Clean Water Act it’s allowed, previously with SRF it was not allowed. Working to amend and update guidance for BIL law.

**Cathi Read:** work with very small communities in large census tract, not reflective of MHI surrounding them. RCAC challenged to complete income surveys. ERWOW required fee to complete survey. Pockets of low income within higher income tracts. **Jocelyne:** looking to get more technical resources, income surveys can be hard to complete. Very aware of low-income pockets within wealthy counties.

**Mike Means:** It’s a lot to go through the matrix. Is this the right way to go? The right scoring? Are there other options than MHI and affordability index? Other scoring points? Any thoughts?

**4. Agenda Ideas for September Meeting**

John Freitag, Policy Planning Lead

**Discussion**

**Mike Means:** No meeting scheduled for August. Timing is critical for next topics. One is the LCR and LCRR presentations to Board of Health, where we’re at, what we’ve learned from EPA. Good feedback from communities to move forward with adoption. Possibly talk about Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with EPA. Keeping an eye on issues: Cyber security, sanitary surveys. Kim Moore is back from deployment and digging into some of this, so ready for the September meeting.

**Jeff Johnson:** progress on MOU with Ecology. Water law update and working with DOE for municipal water suppliers. **John Freitag:** I’m liaison



with Ecology, goal is to have draft for agency level review by late August. September DWAG meeting may be timely.

**Mike Means:** Curious to hear policy 3020 comments. Interesting to catch up with water systems. **Jeff Johnson:** Comments are under attorney client privilege, but we'll get it out when ready, final review of comments mid-Sept. Will be finalized after that, so after the September meeting.

**Jamie Clark:** My thoughts echo Cathi's. MHI is still an important tool for disadvantaged communities within large, wealthy census tracts.

**Tyler Clary (City of Vancouver):** We tried calculating our score and it's a big issue for larger water utilities that had no way of meeting a disadvantaged community ranking. Its nice to have it spread out across a lot of different calculations to determine score. One of the issues we had that would need more DOH guidance is when you're calculating average utility charge per MHI. Most water utilities serve areas with multiple sewer and stormwater boundaries. So trying to figure out the average utility rate for the entire water service boundary, which is across multiple utilities. We thought that a score of five may be a little low. **Mike Means:** That was one of our considerations as we ran the numbers on them. As we learn, we'll run the numbers again so that we don't have 100 percent of water systems that are disadvantaged.

**Jennifer Kropack:** And thinking about when we were trying to figure out for some of the larger utilities in the northwest, how to make what he's saying happen. I was thinking that because there is such a variety of utilities that are doing sewer or the census tracts don't work, that you're going to have to look at housing units in a sub area. So for the little guys in the census track thing, what's too big housing units and then run the matrix? I believe we all know who the small towns and cities are that can meet DAC. Is there a source list for these so they automatically are DAC and don't have to do income surveys? **Jocelyne Gray:** We don't have guidance yet. We're first trying to figure out the criteria, then we can develop the guidance which will be and that's what we're trying to get today is some feedback. We'll just say because that language needs to be in our guidance that is published September 1st for the construction loan cycle. Then we can get into more details on how to figure out your disadvantage and how to do calculations and the step by step. Maybe instead of the annual combined water, we go back to just the annual water cost. So you only look at your water rates for your service area.

**Mike Means:** You know, we heard more information from EPA on Tuesday of last week that we're getting some legal counsel to discuss the opportunity to be able to allow for smaller disadvantaged communities within a larger service area provided water by that larger water service provider. But we could consider that to be disadvantaged rather than encompassing the entire service area. So that could make calculations a



whole lot easier if it's prescribed to specific projects within larger service areas. In some ways, we should find out more about that soon.

**Polling Question**

- ◆ Do we use the annual average combined water, sewer, and storm drainage rates for the affordability calculation?
  - 24 responses.
    - Yes 41% (10)
    - No 58% (14)

**September Agenda Items**

- ◆ DWSRF update.
- ◆ Rulemaking update.
- ◆ MOU with EPA.
- ◆ Cyber security.
- ◆ Update on MOU with Ecology.

Send any other concerns, ideas, or suggested agenda items to [Brad Burnham](#).