

State Water Plan Update Statewide Committee Meeting

October 28, 2025

1300 – 1600

Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting and In-Person
Rachel Carson State Office Building
400 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101

Minutes

COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Voting Members		
Len Bradley, P.E.	Kate Harper	Deb Simko
Carol Collier	Jason Minnich	John St. Clair
Sean Donnelly	Kevin Moore (IP)	Scott Stuccio
Jennifer Fetter	Zachary Salada	Harry Wise
Andrew Gutshall	Trisha Salvia	Davitt Woodwell (IP)
Non-Voting Members		
Andrew Dehoff (IP)	Heidi Moltz	
Kristen Kavanagh	Tree Zuzzio	

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

James Horton – DEP (IP)	Winn Costantini	Dong Yoon Kim
Dave Jostenski – DEP (IP)	Megan Dennis	John Lancaster
Erin Rybacki – DEP (IP)	Andy Gavin	Josh Lookenbill
Molly Brown	Matt Genchur (IP)	Trent Machamer
Kathryn Christopher	Scott Heidel	Chad Reisch
Jonathan Conville	Tom Herbert	Theodore Tesler
	Thomas Hughes	

(IP) – Attended In-Person

AGENDA:

Time	Presenter	Topic
1000	DEP	Welcome and Introductions
<p>James Horton (DEP) welcomed all attendees to the meeting, noted that the session was being recorded, and provided guidance on the use of meeting technology as well as housekeeping procedures for the virtual format. Attendance was documented through the online participants' log. Both virtual and in-person participants introduced themselves.</p>		

1005	Chair	Administrative Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elect Chair/Vice • Finalize Draft Meeting Summary • Public Comment
<p>Administrative / Quorum Update Quorum: 13 voting members present, quorum not reached (16 voting members needed). Elections deferred. James Horton explained the Chair’s duties and asked for volunteers for Acting Chair. Kate Harper volunteered to serve as Acting Chair for the meeting. Acting Chair Harper assumed responsibility for administrative items.</p> <p>Draft Meeting Summary: The draft meeting summary from the October 2024 meeting was distributed prior to the meeting. Acting Chair Harper asked if there were any corrections. No corrections were offered. The meeting minutes are ready for approval.</p> <p>Public Comment: James Horton (DEP) explained public comments will be limited to three minutes. Acting Chair Harper opened the floor to verbal and chat comments. No comments received.</p>		
1330	DEP	DEP Update Presentation
<p>Act 220 Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established committee structure: 6 Regional Committees + 1 Statewide Committee. • Historic inventories/assessments: Extensive work completed in the 1980s. • CWPAs & CARPs: Statewide screening identified areas at risk for water-availability issues; plans exist but are not the focus of this update. • Policies & recommendations: Act 220 enabled policy development but no direct regulatory/enforcement authority (see Chapter 110; no fines or enforcement authority). • Act 220 does not prescribe what the plan must look like. <p>2009 Update 150 page report, primarily a qualitative assessment.</p> <p>2027 State Water Plan Vision and Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility over volume: Avoid producing inventories/assessments that aren’t useful or are redundant with existing work. • Forum and Expertise: Regular committee meetings on an annual cycle (presentations → toolkit updates → refreshed legislative recommendations). Public participation via webinars/meetings is encouraged. A core product of the SWP is bringing people together to identify problems, share expertise, and inform policy; webinars will be posted for broader access. 		

- Data: Regional “Toolkits” that curate high-value water-resources information primarily for use by local governments. Start with a links webpage; may evolve to a story map or a “one stop shop” dashboard for water resources information.
- Updated Story Map with region-specific sections

Timeline

- October 2025 (now): Vision and outputs introduced to committees.
- April 2026: Form a workgroup in each region to define what belongs in the toolkit. What are important issues in the region and what information/resources would people need. Discuss a webinar series to pull in topic experts.
- October 2026: Reconvene committees to review in-progress toolkits/story map, prepare for public hearing presentation for each regional committee (Act 220 requirement).
- April 2027: Host public hearings; committees vote to advance regional content for the statewide plan.
- October 2027: Vote to approve/disapprove the SWP. Final package will include (1) summaries of presentations/discussions, (2) toolkit updates with links, and (3) refreshed legislative priorities, with signature by the DEP Secretary and the Statewide Committee Chair.

Committee Membership & Recruiting

- Ongoing recruitment; DEP will pursue nominees provided by members.
- Composition (23 volunteers): County government: county planning commission directors (2) or county conservation districts directors (2), non-county local government (3), agriculture: production (1) and horticulture (1), public water supply (1), public wastewater (1), industrial and commercial enterprises and energy development and production (3), environment and conservation (3), water resources management: Geologist (1), Engineer/Hydrologist/Geologist/Planner/Lawyer/Economist (3), compact or river basin commission representative (1), DEP employee, non-voting (1)
- Nomination process: Interest in position + appropriate vacancy → letter of interest + nominating letter + résumé, addressed to Governor Shapiro; DEP review → oath of office → appointment letter.
- Open Vacancies for Upper/Middle Susquehanna: Industrial (1), Horticulture (1), Agriculture (1), Environment and Conservation, and Local Government (non-county) (1)

Immediate Next Steps

April (next spring): ~1-hour regional workgroup meeting (informal; no committee business) to define toolkit components and prioritize presentations. Volunteers requested.

Comments/Discussion

- Deb Simko volunteered to be on the workgroup (ideas for watershed toolkits)
- Committee discussed having two workgroups: one group to revisit legislative priorities and one for the toolkit workgroup

1400	DEP	Drought Management in Pennsylvania
-------------	------------	---

James Horton, Erin Rybacki, and Jason Minnich (DEP) provided an overview of Pennsylvania’s drought-management framework with a focus on groundwater recovery. The presentation reviewed the state’s drought stages, groundwater recharge processes, and how drought conditions are assessed and managed operationally. The presenters also addressed common public misconceptions and outlined ongoing efforts to improve communication with water suppliers and the public. Slides and the recording provide additional detail.

1430	DEP	The Chesapeake Bay – Modeling and Monitoring
-------------	------------	---

The presentation provided an overview of Chesapeake Bay modeling and monitoring efforts, highlighting recent trends in Bay health, water-quality data, and best management practice (BMP) implementation. It summarized the 2024 Chesapeake Bay Report Card results, ongoing monitoring of nitrogen loads, and Pennsylvania’s increasing BMP implementation. The presentation also reviewed watershed monitoring networks and updates to Pennsylvania’s Integrated Water Quality Report. Slides and the recording provide additional detail.

1500	PEMA	Water Resources and Flood Resilience
-------------	-------------	---

Tom Hughes (PEMA) provided a broad update on statewide emergency management and disaster-recovery issues, including recent federal and state disaster declarations, shifting responsibilities from response to long-term recovery, and the effects of federal funding cuts and program changes on mitigation efforts. The presentation also touched on state-led assistance programs, challenges in administering hazard-mitigation and flood-insurance programs, and emerging needs. Slides and the recording provide additional detail.

1530	Committee	Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish Workgroup• Presentation Recommendations• Toolkit Ideas
-------------	------------------	---

James Horton discussed the objective of the workgroup: Bring stakeholders together to discuss what should be included in a Toolkit and the format it should take.

Toolkit Work Group Volunteers:

- Deb Simko
- Andrew Dehoff
- Sean Donnelly
- Heidi Moltz
- Scott Stuccio
- Zachary Salada
- Kristen Kavanagh

Legislative Priorities Work Group Volunteers:

- Kate Harper
- Carol Collier
- Trisha Salvia
- Kristen Kavanagh

Toolkit Topics:

- PEMA Grant resources
- Land use and recharge areas tool
- Resources from Carol Collier
- DRBC – Extreme precipitation tool
- SRBC – Critical Aquifer Recharge Area tool
- Stormwater tool for flooding, droughts, etc.
- Scott Stuccio – Installing new iflow systems, including soil moisture tool

Presentation topic recommendations:

- Role of the PUC (Sean Donnelly offered to give a presentation)
- Hyperscale Data Centers Water Usage
- How team PA roadmap intersects with State Water Plan and water planning

1555	DEP	Next Steps
Assemble workgroup meetings in April 2026 Develop webinar series DEP to prepare follow up emails		
1600	Chair	Adjourn
The meeting was adjourned by general consent at 3:50 PM due to lack of quorum.		

ACTION ITEMS:

Task	Responsible Party
Follow up regarding workgroup participation, survey, next meetings, and recruiting	DEP
Assemble workgroup meeting in April 2026	DEP