



Pennsylvania

Department of Environmental Protection

Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) Meeting Meeting Minutes | January 14, 2026, 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Rachel Carson State Office Building, 400 Market Street Room 105, Harrisburg, PA 17101 and Microsoft® Teams online.

Call to Order, Introductions, & Attendance – Matthew Genchur, Chair

The meeting was called to order by Chair Matthew Genchur at 9:33 a.m. Bob Haines conducted a roll call and of the 12-member committee, 9 members were present. A quorum was established.

The following committee members were present:

- Chair Matthew Genchur.....Resource Environmental Solutions (RES)
Vice-chair Beth Uhler.....Center for Watershed Protection
Myron Arnowitt.....Clean Water Action
Harry Campbell.....Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Alexandra Chiaruttini.....The York Water Company
Jenifer Christman.....Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
Andrew Dehoff.....Susquehanna River Basin Commission
John Jackson, Ph.D.....Stroud Water Research Center
Kristen Kavanagh, P.E.....Delaware River Basin Commission

The following committee members were absent:

- Theo Light, Ph.D.....Shippensburg University
Cory Miller.....University Area Joint Authority
Dean Miller.....Pennsylvania Water Environment Association

Review and Approval of Minutes from November 4, 2025, Meeting (Action) – Matthew Genchur, Chair

Chair Genchur requested consideration of the November 4, 2025, draft meeting minutes.

Motion: Jenifer Christman made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from November with John Jackson seconding the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment – Matthew Genchur, Chair

There were no public comments.

Chapter 92a Fee Report– Harmonie Hawley, Environmental Engineer Manager, Bureau of Clean Water

Harmonie provided the Committee with a summary of the required 3-year fee reports for Chapters 91 (Water Quality Management (WQM) permitting) and 92a (NPDES Program), which evaluate permit application fees and program expenses during prior fiscal years. Harmonie addressed questions and comments from the Committee.

Harry Campbell expressed appreciation for the information provided and asked whether the department has evaluated, considered, or otherwise observed impacts over the past three to five years related to increasing costs of doing business, inflation, and other external factors. Harry also asked how these factors are influencing fee increases and how effectively DEP expects to use those resources in the future.

Sean Furjanic responded by noting inflationary pressures, particularly related to personnel costs, as well as additional unanticipated expenses incurred between 2018 and 2020 during the advancement of rulemaking for Chapters 91 and 92a. Sean stated that these factors contribute to considerations regarding potential future fee increases.

Myron Arnowitz observed that federal support has remained relatively consistent over the past eight years and asked whether the department has concerns about possible changes to federal support moving forward. Jay Patel responded that DEP prepared for potential changes but has not experienced any significant funding reductions. Jay explained the various sources of DEP funding and noted that multiple funding streams support the Department's work. Jay concluded by stating that DEP maintains diverse funding sources to remain prepared should changes occur.

Alexandra Chiaruttini shared observations based on extensive experience working with DEP staff and stated the belief that the department is understaffed. Alexandra expressed support for fee increases, particularly within water programs, and strongly encouraged the agency to track workloads to better demonstrate the volume of work required.

Matthew Genchur asked when fees were last increased prior to the 2021 fee adjustment and inquired about the overall history of fee increases. Sean Furjanic responded that Chapter 91 fees had not increased since the chapter was promulgated in 1970. Sean noted that while additional permits were added around 2000, the base fee of approximately \$500 has remained unchanged since 1970. For Chapter 92a, fee increases occurred in the late 1990s, in 2010, and again in 2021. Matthew emphasized the importance of monitoring fees and ensuring they keep pace with the cost of doing business.

Draft Biosolids NPDES General Permits (PAG-07, 08, 09) (Informational) – Richard Wright, Environmental Program Manager, Bureau of Clean Water

Richard provided the Committee with a summary of proposed changes to the permits including: (1) PFAS reduction strategy (monitoring and tiered approach to mitigation); (2) High strength

organic waste (HSOW) processing; (3) Phosphorus reduction strategy (P-Index); and (4) Storage. Richard addressed questions and comments from the Committee.

Myron Arnowitz opened the comment period by asking about the tiers established for PFAS content in biosolids. Myron inquired about the levels of PFAS currently being detected in biosolids in Pennsylvania and questioned whether the tiers are expected to affect many facilities or only a limited number. Richard responded that a definitive answer is not yet available, as the Department is awaiting a report from Temple University, which has been delayed beyond the anticipated end-of-December 2025 timeframe. Richard explained that the tiers were developed using data and approaches similar to those used in Michigan, where current samples show PFAS concentrations of less than 20 parts per billion.

Harry Campbell thanked Richard for the information and asked whether further detail could be provided regarding the P Index and its adequacy. Harry also asked whether potential adjustments or considerations may be needed in other sectors, such as fertilizer applications. Richard explained that PFAS is either bioavailable or not, and that treatment methods such as alum or metal salt precipitation result in PFAS that is not bioavailable. Richard noted that when PFAS concentrations are high but largely unavailable for plant uptake, there is concern that restrictions may be overly conservative, indicating a need for additional evaluation. Harry asked whether this would require further research or an alternative methodology. Richard responded that it would likely involve a deviation informed by ongoing research at Penn State, noting that efforts are being made to balance multiple stakeholders needs and acknowledging that further research is underway.

John Jackson thanked participants for the discussion and raised concerns regarding uncertainty surrounding microplastics, asking what the Department's primary concerns are from a regulatory perspective. Richard Wright responded by referencing the EPA's ongoing risk assessment and stated that the Department is awaiting guidance from that process. Richard explained that the interim strategy focuses on removing materials most impacted by industrial sources. Richard then invited Jay Patel to add any additional comments.

Jay Patel agreed with the interim strategy and discussed the EPA risk assessment findings, noting that land applicators of biosolids and academic institutions do not always align with EPA conclusions. Jay explained that land application of biosolids presents more complexity than drinking water due to multiple exposure pathways. Jay stated that the interim approach is intended to mitigate risk to the greatest extent possible until scientific understanding advances.

John responded by emphasizing the importance of public interest and expressed concern that it may sometimes appear secondary. Jay discussed Maine's ban on land application of biosolids and referenced historic land application in parts of the Northeast before PFAS was well understood. Jay emphasized the importance of collecting data for land applicators and farmers while acknowledging their concerns. Jay stated that the Department will be monitoring biosolids permits and that the resulting data will be publicly available, which is expected to address transparency concerns.

John followed up by asking whether treated wastewater used in public settings, such as parks or golf courses, is being tested for PFAS. Jay responded that such testing is not currently required but stated that the Department is beginning the process of incorporating monitoring requirements as part of permit renewals. Jay noted that the comment would be taken back for further consideration. John concluded by reiterating concerns related to PFAS accumulation through recreational exposure.

Jenifer Christman thanked participants for the discussion and expressed appreciation for the information shared.

Matthew Genchur thanked Richard for the presentation and discussion and reopened the floor for additional public comment

General Discussion/Agenda Topics Request – Matthew Genchur, Chair

Alexandra Chiaruttini asked what the status is of the Act 537 statutory or regulatory update package. Jay Patel responded stating the Department has been holding meetings since July with the Sewage Advisory Committee. Jay hopes that the formal recommendations will come by a January 29th meeting and then at that point things can begin to move forward. Jay continued stating they have received a lot of good input from the Sewage Advisory Committee and that they're on their way.

Matthew Genchur then discussed the necessity of the current committee to pass along the necessary information for reappointment to the committee and the desire to add new members to the committee. Matthew stated they have lost a few members in the past year or two and it would be good to add new members.

Bob Haines discussed two members having outstanding information necessary for reappointment.

Adjournment – Matthew Genchur, Chair

Chair Genchur asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Alexandra Chiaruttini made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jenifer Christman seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 10:54 a.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 11, 2026