



## NEW JERSEY CLEAN WATER COUNCIL MEETING

March 12, 2024 | 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

### Meeting Summary

#### INTRODUCTIONS

Tony McCracken called meeting to order at 10:05 AM

**Council Participants (10):** Anthony McCracken, George Bakun, James Cosgrove, Maria Connolly, James Revak (for Krishna Jagannathan), David Kovach, Amy Goldsmith, Pamela Goodwin, Ashley Kerr, and Russ Furnari

**DEP Participants (8):** Susan Rosenwinkel, Jennifer Feltis Cortese, John Murray, Christine Enright, Charles Jenkins, Samantha Thomas, Lisa Congiu, and Marco Alebus

**Public Participants (1):** Wale Adewunmi

#### APPROVAL OF MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- January 9, 2024 – Approved: James Cosgrove Moved, Maria Connolly Second.

#### DEP UPDATES

Provided by John Murray.

#### **Proposed State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2025 Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Intended Use Plans (IUPs) Public Hearing:**

- Proposed SFY 2025 Clean Water and Drinking Water IUPs, published on December 22, 2023, and a public hearing was held on January 10, 2024. Enhancements to the SFY 2025 IUPs include the following: Doubled financing caps. Increased support for underserved communities through the Technical Assistance Program and tiered principal forgiveness for DACs. 75% interest-free DEP financing for Sponsors with an Affordability Score 100 and below. Significant changes to the final IUPs are not expected.

#### **Division of Water Quality Participation in Atlantic County Board of Agriculture Meeting:**

- Representatives of the Bureau of Groundwater, Residuals and Permit Administration attended this annual meeting on February 12, 2024 and provided a presentation on the Discharge to Groundwater Farm Labor Housing General Permit, which became effective June 1, 2023. Blueberry farmers expressed appreciation of DWQ's presence to clarify questions they had regarding the permit.

#### **NJPDES CSO Public Hearing- Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority (CCMUA):**

- Held a virtual public hearing on January 22, 2024, regarding NJPDES CSO permits for the CCMUA, the City of Camden and Gloucester City. This was the third public hearing on these permits with the previous two being held on December 15, 2023, and January 22, 2024. Comments also included a desire for reduced project costs and shortened project timelines.

#### **NJDEP and North Hudson Sewerage Authority (NHSA) Sign Administrative Compliance Agreement:**

- On February 6, 2024, DWQ and NHSA signed a historic Administrative Compliance Agreement to approve North Hudson Sewerage Authority's Adams Street STP Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) and to require implementation of the CSO abatement projects in that LTCP beyond the five-year NJPDES permit cycle. NHSA thanked DWQ for

its assistance in developing an LTCP that would significantly reduce CSO discharges and minimize disruption and cost. Commissioner LaTourette spoke as well saying NJDEP was proud to partner with NHSA and looked forward to working with more communities on the long-term efforts needed to effectively address the unhealthy discharges from antiquated CSO systems. The final NJPDES CSO permit was issued to NHSA on February 7, 2024. NHSA Adams Street STP serves the City of Hoboken as well as portions of Weehawken and Union City.

- Council and DEP discussion: Demonstration of meeting LTCP goals and climate projections. Permittees will provide data in monthly DMRs for overflows and provide other updates on projects and LTCP implementations on Semi-annual Progress Reports. There is a lot of funding available to get projects moving forward and these success stories will encourage further investments and support of implementing LTCPs.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- Presentation on Financing Pathways for Resilience – New Jersey Water Bank by Samantha Thomas - Administrative Analyst, Bureau of Construction, Payments, and Administration | NJDEP
  - Discussion:
    - There are adequate funds available, projects are ranked by priority, but readiness to proceed is also a factor.
    - There are ongoing efforts to reach Overburdened Communities (OBC) and offer technical assistance. Drinking water has ongoing outreach regarding Lead Service Line replacements.
    - Principal Forgiveness (PF) is confirmed when construction contract is final. Planning expenses have been a concern for Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) but now can receive up to \$2M of PF for planning and design. This is a significant change for the Water Bank program.
    - Stormwater Management packages are focused on DACs but it is not a requirement to get the funding package.
    - Technical Assistance (TA) is configured so that there is no obligation to move forward with a project.
    - There are some funds available for facilities needing flood wall protection.
- Presentation on Regulation of Nutrients for New Jersey POTWs by Lisa Congiu Research Scientist, Bureau of Surface Water and Pretreatment Permitting | NJDEP
  - Discussion:
    - TMDLs may provide an opportunity to look at what nutrients could be entering the waterways from soils or groundwater. There are efforts to improve how TMDLs are addressed in MS4 Permit requirements.
    - General discussion about how nitrate and phosphorus exist in the environment and the complications for regulating and addressing impacts at various levels, homeowner, watershed, municipal, etc. It is also unclear the impact that the fertilizer law has had on the levels of phosphorus or nitrate in the environment. Other sources such as leaf decomposition could also contribute to increased levels of nutrients in water and soil.
- Next Clean Water Council Meeting on May 14, 2024 at Stonybrook Wastewater Treatment Plant
  - The plan is to meet at 10AM in a conference room for discussion prior to a tour of the facility.
  - John Murray will reach out to find out how many people will be attending and what personal protection equipment (PPE) is required.
- Clean Water Council Memberships
  - John Murray to send the following by end of month:
    - instructions on how to apply to be reappointed;
    - list of current members and available openings; and
    - regulations regarding organizations' submittals for open positions.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### Subcommittee Updates

- **TMDL** - *George Bakun, James Cosgrove, Amy Goldsmith*
  - James Cosgrove suggested considering having Stormwater present on progress for the development of a new tool for municipalities with MS4 permits to identify what TMDLs are valid for their municipality, where they are and what the requirements are.
  
- **WQMP and Septic Management Plan** - *Tony McCracken, James Cosgrove, Sandra Howland, Ashley Kerr*
  - Anthony McCracken reached out to the Division of Watershed and Land Management for an update, information provided is as follows:
    - There have not been any recent WQMP approvals and only received two Wastewater Management Plans and 52 amendments and revisions.
    - The backlog remains the same at this time.
    - Regardless of size, the fastest amendment is about 8 months from the time of submission.
  
- **Policy Committee** - *Maria Connolly, Harry Wozunk, Peggy Gallos*
  - Reintroduced to Senate:
    - S-286: Permitting local authorities to reduce for low income.
    - S-998: NJ water infrastructure center at designated higher education.
  
- **Education** - *Amy Goldsmith, John Murray, David Kovach*
  - Sewage Free Streets - education activities happening around CSO permit outreach.
  - Recent focus on cyber threats. Resources are available and all levels of government are working on threat resilience to better protect utilities.
  
- **DRBC** - *Dave Kovach, George Bakun*
  - Executive Director, Steve Tambini is retiring.
  - Ramping up for summer monitoring and hiring has begun. Bacteria monitoring for PA and the main stem of the Delaware River has been proposed.
  - Continuing to work on updating rules and procedures.
  - No DRBC specific presentations planned right now, however expecting EPA to release/approve new water criteria in 2025.
  - DEP Commissioner and DRBC Regional Administration are speaking on May 8 in Atlantic City to discuss phosphorus standards.
  
- **Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) and Chlorides** – *Open*
  - DRBC is continually doing this monitoring and seeing a rise in non-tidal portions of the Delaware River. The trend shows that levels continue to go up but have not come back down.

### Suggested Topics

- Reclaimed water beneficiary reuse program and how to expand current DEP program.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Next meetings:
  - May 14, 2023 - Offsite - Stonybrook WWTP
    - RSVP to John Murray by end of April
  - June 11, 2024
    - Possible Topics: Reclaimed Beneficial Water Reuse (USGS and/or DEP), TMDL (if ready), or Incinerators

- September 10, 2024 - Tentative offsite meeting

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn from Amy Goldsmith and second by James Cosgrove. Adjourned at 11:55AM.