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Drinking Water Advisory Committee

**February 20, 2007
9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

**Ohio EPA
Lazarus Government Center
EPA Conference Room Autumn**

Abstract

The following updates are highlights of the February 20, 2007 Drinking Water Advisory Committee (DWAC) meeting. The executive summary follows the abstract.

Major agenda items included discussions on Emergency Preparedness and Communication Strategies. Pandemic Planning was also a major topic focusing on what Ohio EPA is doing to prepare and how Ohio EPA can aid small systems in planning for a pandemic. Updates were provided on the agency's transition under Governor Strickland, Operator Certification implementation, small system operator training, SDWIS, and Disadvantage Community and Industrial Waste Rules. The meeting concluded with a roundtable discussion.

A. Chief's Update - Mike Baker

Agency Transition

Governor Strickland appointed Chris Korleski as new Director, who previously served as counsel for Honda of America, and also was in the Environmental Enforcement Section of the Attorney Generals Office. Director Korleski reappointed Laura Powell as Assistant Director. Other significant appointments include: Deputy of Legal Affairs, Drew Bergman; Deputy of Communications, Melissa Fazekas; Executive Assistant at the Governor's Office, Jennifer Lynch; and Chris Snider will continue as the Director's Executive Assistant.

A significant portion of the new Director's time has been dealing with Countywide Landfill and odor complaints. Director Korleski will make a recommendation on further action on February 21, 2007. The director does have a keen interest in drinking water issues because of the public health impact.

The division is not expected to encounter budget difficulties this biennium despite projected state-wide shortages, as the division's funding sources are not based on general revenue funds. There is continued concern about inability to get small incremental fee increases; this concern may be raised during the next

biennium budget cycle.

Operator Certification Rule Update

The JCARR hearing for the operator certification rules was held on November 20, 2006, and the rules passed despite substantial oppositional testimony. The rules became effective on December 21, 2006 and were appealed on January 11, 2007 by Cincinnati on behalf of the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati, Hamilton County, Ohio and the Association of Ohio Metropolitan Wastewater Agencies. There has not been a stay on the rules. Therefore, Ohio EPA is moving forward with implementation of the rules.

Small System Operator Training

A request for proposal is being prepared for small system operator training. Ideas are still being considered, but the workgroup is on hold as to minimize potential conflict of interest.

NPDES General Permit

A general NPDES permit for hydrostatic test water and water supply water is currently out for general review. The comment period ends the beginning of March.

Electronic Drinking Water Reporting-DRINKware replacement

DRINKware is being phased out to make way for the new web-based state drinking water reporting. DDAGW will pilot this program for a short time and phase out DRINKware by the end of next year.

Disadvantaged Community Rules

The disadvantaged community rules were finalized in Fall 2006. Eligible communities can qualify for principle forgiveness and low-interest extended term loans. Application deadline is March 15 to receive money in July 2007.

Needs Survey

Some communities are receiving letters regarding the third 3-year SRF Needs Survey. Ohio's allotment of Federal Funding for the loan program is assessed based on the needs survey.

Industrial Waste Rules

Construction and demolition debris landfill siting requirements were released for interested party review (IPR) last summer and received many comments and much opposition. Groundwater protection provisions contained many restrictions

for landfill placement, such as prohibiting landfill placement in a 5 year time of travel (TOT) zone or over a high-volume aquifer (>100gpm).

B. Emergency Preparedness - Mike Baker

Mike discussed how the increasing focus on emergency preparedness since 9-11 has forced DDAGW to evaluate where preparedness fits into the division's day to day activities. Over the last few years, DDAGW has spent a lot of time evaluating its programs to determine effectiveness at protecting public health by minimizing the public's potential exposures to contaminants by enforcement and compliance and enhancing system capability.

Potential public health threats are immeasurably amplified during an emergency event, therefore the division has made emergency preparedness a main priority. Over the last several years, the division has undertaken a number of activities to improve its preparedness, including:

1. 9-11 Vulnerability Assessment and Contingency Plans
2. Ohio EPA-State and Local Contingency Plan
3. Creation of DDAGW Emergency Response Team
4. Hosted Incident Command System (ICS) workshop
5. Participation in table top exercises
6. Purchase of MARCS radios

C. Pandemic Planning - Kirk Leifheit

A member discussion on Pandemic Flu Planning at Ohio EPA included pertinent information on the DDAGW plan and Small System Preparedness. The Ohio EPA Pandemic Flu Plan contains information such as essential employees, employee health and safety, communications, building operation and maintenance, and scenarios for the potential increases and decreases in services. It is important for Ohio EPA to consider and work together with small public water systems because of the potential impact on operations. There could be up to 40% of workers out during a pandemic flu event, thus severely affecting small system operations. This is a critical part of our emergency planning. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is attached for your reference.

D. Communication Strategies - Kirk Leifheit

Kirk led a member discussion on the Division's communication strategy for emergency situations focusing on resources available to communicate with public water systems (PWS), procedures for contacting PWSs, establishing responsibilities for communication within DDAGW and identifying emergency and security contacts. A copy of Kirk's PowerPoint presentation is attached for your reference.

Discussion: The goal is to get important information to public water systems without creating increased and unnecessary burdens during emergency situations. There is not one way to communicate with all public water systems in the State. To communicate during an emergency many methods will need to be used: phone, fax, email and computer software such as the electronic drinking water reporting system. It may be helpful to find out if systems have a preference. Often systems do not know the importance of updating contact information. It is thought using other agencies and associations to relay information to their membership may be an important way to reach PWSs. Associations such as OTCO and AWWA typically have more up-to-date information than Ohio EPA. Specific questions for DWAC are listed below:

1. What planning are water systems doing for a pandemic flu incident?
2. How can Ohio EPA aid public water systems in preparing for a pandemic flu incident?
3. How can Ohio EPA communicate information to and receive information from public water systems?

E. Rule Initiatives - Gina Hayes

Members were provided with status updates on recent state and federal rule-making activities and asked to refer to the attached State and Federal Rule-making Update handouts for details.

F. Member Roundtable

Tom Fishbaugh, RCAP, announced utilities board training begins at the end of March offering such courses as: Utilities Management, Financial Management and Asset Management, Budgeting and Rate Setting for local officials. Please see their website for information: <http://glrcap.org/ohio/>.

DDAGW Representatives:

Mike Baker
Beth Messer
Kirk Leifheit
Holly Kaloz
Gina Hayes

DWAC Attendees:

Curtis Truss, Operator Training Commission of Ohio
Tom Fishbaugh, Ohio Rural Community Assistance Program
Nancy Osborn, Ottawa County Health Department
Dave Thalman, Ohio Manufactured Homes Association
Brock Wanless, Ohio Homebuilders Association
Steve Grossman, Ohio Water Development Authority
Jenn Klein, Ohio Chamber of Commerce

Handouts:

- DDAGW Communication Strategy (PowerPoint presentation)
- Pandemic Flu Planning at Ohio EPA (PowerPoint presentation)
- Ohio EPA-*Drinking Water Supply Emergency Plan*-Volume 2: Public Water Systems
- Federal Rule Making Update
- State Rule Making Update

Next Meeting: May 22, 2007

Members were asked to provide ideas for this years agenda items and to provide feedback on Volume 2 of the *Drinking Water Emergency Supply Plan*.