
WUC

Water Utility Council of the
PA-Section, American Water
Works Association (PA-AWWA)



GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

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*PA- Section, American Water Works Association
National Association of Water Companies
Water Works Operators' Association of Pennsylvania*

Community Clean Water Toolbox Launched to Expand Local Engagement in Reducing Pollution in Pennsylvania's Part of Chesapeake Bay Watershed

About 200 leaders from municipal governments, county conservation districts, agriculture, environmental groups, water companies, and other entities participated today in a meeting hosted by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to expand local engagement in [Phase 3](#) of the state plan for improving water quality in Pennsylvania's portion of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

"After the successful public kickoff of the Phase 3 planning process last June, the steering committee and six work groups—about 80 state and local volunteers—worked to compile data, analyze research, and determine the most viable strategies to meet our obligations," said DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell. "Taking a county-level approach is critical if Pennsylvania is to attain its pollution reduction goals."

Participants in today's meeting shared their expertise to help finalize the [Community Clean Water Toolbox](#) drafted by the Local Area Goals Work Group, co-chaired by Lisa Shaeffer, Director of Government Relations, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania; Steve Taglang, DEP Bureau of Clean Water; and Davitt Woodwell, President and CEO, Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

The toolbox presents a draft set of local data, resource, engagement, planning, and tracking tools available to counties for developing and implementing action plans to reduce nitrogen, phosphorous, and sediment from streams and rivers. It quantifies the amount of pollutants reduced so far, current pollutant levels, and further reductions needed for each county.

"Rather than a regulatory requirement, the aim is to have counties use these numbers to define their pollutant reduction goals and identify existing and proposed local initiatives that can help meet them," said Secretary McDonnell. The goals are measurable and trackable to ensure progress.

Partners throughout the watershed counties have been working to reduce the amount of nutrients and sediment getting into the water by implementing best management practices such as improved manure management, no-till farming, stream

restoration, bioswales, fencing to keep animals out of streams, and streambank tree plantings.

“Pennsylvania’s economy, as well as the food supply of our region and beyond, depends on clean water and healthy, viable farms,” Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding said. “You can’t have one without the other. Our farmers have shown themselves to be conscientious stewards of land and water resources, but meeting the goal of reducing nitrogen going into the Bay by 36 million pounds will take a monumental effort and a fresh approach. This county-level approach is another step toward that goal.”

“Many of our daily activities can affect water quality in our watersheds, so we all can play a role in protecting and improving our local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay,” said Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn. “Efforts to plant trees along streams and conserve forested lands have great momentum now in Pennsylvania, and we’re happy to work with others on the local level to implement these practices for clean water.”

A diverse group of participants from across Pennsylvania’s Bay watershed attended today’s meeting, with many representatives from Lancaster, York, Adams, and Franklin Counties. These counties will pilot the toolbox to create their action plans by October.

The toolbox will then be further modified, as needed, for potential use by other counties in the watershed. A timeline for completion of their action plans will be included in the state Phase 3 plan due to EPA early next year.

EPA’s draft pollutant reduction targets for Pennsylvania’s part of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed are 73.1 million pounds of nitrogen and 3 million pounds of phosphorous. (Final targets are expected this summer.) To meet these goals, the state needs to eliminate 36.3 million pounds of nitrogen and .8 million pounds of phosphorous.

Source: DEP Press Release, 4/10/2018

PUC Chairman Brown Brings #UtilityCareers Campaign to Pittsburgh Area; Joins Community College of Allegheny County & Utility Leaders to Highlight Impact & Importance of Utility Workforce

On April 12, 2018, Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) Chairman Gladys M. Brown joined with leaders from the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC), along with utilities from across the region, to highlight the importance and impact of educating the next generation of utility workers.

Chairman Brown noted that across Pennsylvania, and throughout the country, there is a strong anticipated need for additional skilled utility workers, driven by a combination of factors - including an aging current workforce as well as the growth of new systems and technologies.

"These opportunities are all around us, but they may be overlooked by students and other job-seekers who are either unaware of, or unclear about, the many #UtilityCareer options available to them," noted Chairman Brown. "Pennsylvania's utilities bring vital services to our homes and businesses, and they also represent tens-of-thousands of community-oriented jobs - with good wages, career growth and training opportunities, and the satisfaction of knowing that you are serving your neighbors."

Chairman Brown was joined by leaders, students and faculty from the college, along with numerous utilities, to encourage talented individuals of all ages and backgrounds to consider careers in the utility sector - which has a strong and growing demand for a new generation of employees. Joining today's event were leaders from Duquesne Light Company, West Penn Power, UGI Utilities,

Columbia Gas, Pennsylvania American Water and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 29.

The strong demand for skilled candidates underscores the importance of educational programs, such as those being offered at CCAC.

"By forging strong partnerships with business and industry and the skilled trades unions in the region, CCAC is able to offer the kind of responsive, skills-based knowledge that both employers and employees need to compete in today's modern workplace," says CCAC President Dr. Quintin Bullock. "This is especially true for careers in the public utilities where a combination of different skills are needed to be successful, including critical thinking, complex problem-solving, advanced technological know-how and knowledge of how business works. At CCAC, we are committed to delivering educational programming that provides students with a competitive advantage when it comes to securing employment in their desired field."

"Utility jobs and skills will remain in demand well into the future, and we encourage talented individuals of all ages and backgrounds - including students, veterans returning to the workforce or adults exploring new career opportunities - to consider careers in the utility sector," Chairman Brown emphasized. "These are systems and people we depend upon to keep our communities safe and healthy, and it is important that we do what we can to ensure that our utilities have the skilled and diverse personnel they need to meet the needs of today and tomorrow."

In Pennsylvania, utility employment is growing faster, and wages are substantially higher, than statewide averages. The average utility wage in Pennsylvania is just over \$93,000 per year, which is nearly twice the average wage for all industries - and the number of utility jobs has increased by more than 11 percent over the past five years, which is five times the job growth for all industries.

The statewide and national appetite for utility skills includes:

- Engineers;

- Field operations, including the people who maintain existing systems and build-out new systems;
- Plant operators, who keep the energy and water flowing to our communities; and
- Various technical positions, including relatively new areas of concern, like Cybersecurity.

Nationally, utilities are expected to hire an additional 70,000 workers by 2020, and growth in the energy sector alone is expected to create an estimated 1.5 million jobs by 2030.

Organizations across the state added their perspective regarding workforce development:

"Duquesne Light Company is proud of its continued partnership with CCAC to develop and deliver the electrical distribution technology certificate program, which provides classroom and on the job training for the next generation of electric utility workers," said Todd Faulk, Vice President of Human Resources at Duquesne Light Company.

"As our lineworker workforce throughout FirstEnergy continues to age, the company continuously seeks out men and women who enjoy working up in the air, in the outdoors, in all types of weather and are committed to the noble service of providing safe, affordable and reliable service to our customers," said Chad Stoneking, Director of Operations Services for West Penn Power. "We commend the Commission and the CCAC for hosting this event and assisting in that shared pursuit."

"Columbia Gas is keenly aware of the need to focus on the future of our industry," said Andy Tubbs, Vice President of External and Customer Affairs for Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania. "Workforce development is part of our daily conversation, and we're proud to join the PUC in its efforts to highlight the importance of education for the next generation of utility workers."

"Today's event highlights the challenge confronting UGI Utilities every day: how will we identify the qualified women and men necessary to safely and reliably deliver energy to our customers and the many communities we serve," said Keith Dorman, vice president of communications and

community relations for UGI Utilities. "UGI has recognized we must continue to attract qualified workers for our utility operations and supporting training programs at Pennsylvania's community colleges and technical schools is one way we are addressing this need."

PUC #UtilityCareers Campaign

Today's event at CCAC is part of a broader collaborative effort by the PUC, public utilities and educational institutions to increase public awareness about career opportunities in the utility sector. The PUC is working with institutions and agencies statewide to spotlight the options available for young people still considering careers, and for those searching for new opportunities.

"This is an issue that goes far beyond one agency or utility. It's an issue that has the potential to impact us all, in terms of the reliability and cost of utility service," said Chairman Brown. "These are systems and people we depend upon to keep our communities safe and healthy, and it is important that we do what we can to ensure that our utilities have the skilled personnel they need to meet the needs of today and tomorrow."

As part of the effort to increase access to information, the PUC has established an enhanced [LinkedIn site](#) to highlight information about job opportunities, not only at the Commission, but also the greater spectrum of utility jobs across the state.

Source: PUC Press Release, 4/12/2018

DEP Releases Data on Oil and Gas Well Structural Soundness Program sets national standard in routine well monitoring to protect groundwater

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has released the first four years of data on [well structural soundness](#) submitted by thousands of Pennsylvania oil and gas well

operators. A comprehensive analysis of the first year, 2014, shows that the majority of wells in the state are being operated in a manner that greatly reduces the risk for groundwater impacts.

"Our Mechanical Integrity Assessment Program is the most rigorous routine well integrity assessment program to protect groundwater in the United States," said DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell. "We're committed to protecting Pennsylvanians' health, safety, and environment through continuous improvement of our regulatory oversight of the oil and gas industry."

Unconventional and conventional operators are required to inspect wells on a quarterly basis for structural soundness to ensure that gas migration is prevented, leaks are managed, and groundwater is protected. They inspect wells for:

- Leaks outside the surface casing, which is the outermost casing layer around the well, designed to protect groundwater;
- Leaks outside the intermediate casing, which is the well casing intended to facilitate safe drilling of most shale gas wells to the depth where gas is found;
- Gas flows or pressures inside and outside the production casing, which is the deepest casing layer in the well;
- Escaping fluids (oil, gas, and saltwater); and
- Severe corrosion.

DEP reviews operators' submitted data for potential problems and violations.

A [comprehensive analysis](#) (including file audits and independent site verification) of data submitted in 2014 showed that less than 1 percent of operator observations indicated the types of integrity problems, such as gas outside surface casing, that could allow gas to move beyond the well footprint. The movement of gas or other fluids beyond a well footprint has the greatest potential to result in environmental concerns.

About 30 percent of wells had gas present outside production casing. In some instances, this occurs due to an approved well design that allows for engineered vents. In a properly designed and

operated well, gas is kept to the well footprint, and won't flow into a water supply.

Operator compliance with mechanical integrity inspection requirements has been consistent since the program began, with reports submitted for approximately 99 percent of unconventional wells and about 50-60 percent of conventional wells. DEP district offices are actively working to improve the number of conventional operators who are in compliance. Those who remain out of compliance are individually responsible for a relatively small number of wells.

The Mechanical Integrity Assessment program has provided DEP district offices with useful information for identifying potential concerns at wells and more effectively assessing whether operator intervention is necessary to protect groundwater.

Some operators have introduced corrosion monitoring programs, become more proactive in plugging wells with depleted reserves, and improved the accuracy of their well inventories through coordination with DEP.

Source: DEP Press Release, 4/13/2018

Sewage Advisory Committee Rescheduled Meeting

The Sewage Advisory Committee meeting previously scheduled for Tuesday, April 24, 2018, has been **rescheduled to Thursday, May 3, 2018**. The meeting will begin at 10:30 a.m. and will be held in Room 105, Rachel Carson State Office Building, 400 Market Street, Harrisburg.

The Department of Environmental Protection will publish the agenda and meeting materials for the May 3 meeting on the Department's website at <http://www.dep.pa.gov> (select "Public Participation," then "Advisory Committees," then "Water Advisory Committees," then "Sewage Advisory Committee").

For more information, contact Janice Vollero at (717) 772-5157.

Source: Pennsylvania Bulletin, [4/14/2018](#)

Local Lawmakers Call for Federal Study to Determine Health Impacts of Water Contamination

Citing local residents' right to safe, clean drinking water, Reps. Todd Stephens (R-Montgomery), Kathy Watson (R-Bucks/144th) and Bernie O'Neill (R-Bucks) thanked their House colleagues for supporting a resolution that asks the federal government to study any potential health effects stemming from water contamination at the former Naval Air Station in Willow Grove.

[House Resolution 682](#), which passed the House unanimously today, urges the U.S. secretary of Health and Human Services to select the former Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base in Willow Grove and the former Naval Air Warfare Center in Warminster for an exposure assessment and study on human health implications of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances ("PFASs") contamination.

"Residents are rightly concerned that there may be long-term health impacts from the water contamination issues the area has experienced," said Stephens. "I am thankful our colleagues in the House recognize the seriousness of this issue and have supported us in getting this resolution passed in a timely fashion. I am also hopeful that the study will also happen quickly and families can start to get some answers."

Over the past several years, public and private drinking water wells in Bucks and Montgomery counties have been shut down due to contamination from PFASs suspected of being released by the military in the form of firefighting foam. PFASs and other emerging contaminants are compounds being sampled for the first time in public water systems. In 2012, the Environmental Protection Agency added PFASs to its list of unregulated contaminants that may be hazardous to human health.

"Local residents deserve to know if their health has been compromised," Watson said. "Although the water is now safe to drink, it is unclear how long these contaminants have been in the water system. By studying this particular case, our neighbors can be afforded additional information and alerted to what they could expect in the future. We're also hopeful it will lead to additional resources and funding being set aside to address whatever impacts are to follow."

"We have been working with our partners in local, state and federal agencies for the past few years to get our residents answers to their questions and concerns," O'Neill said. "So much is still unknown about these contaminants, and that's why this study, which we hope will not take long, is so important - not just to our residents but to anyone nationwide who may have been exposed."

According to the resolution, the assessment and study will help state and federal lawmakers understand the implications of the exposure and will aid the federal government in conjunction with state and local agencies to reverse the contamination and protect the health and welfare of our residents.

Now that the resolution has passed, it will be transmitted to the president of the United States, United States secretary of Health and Human Services, United States secretary of Defense, the presiding officers of each chamber of Congress, and to each member of Congress from Pennsylvania.

Source: House Republican Communications, 4/10/2018

Full House Expected To Debate 5 Bills Creating New Bureaucracies to Take Permit Reviews Away From DEP, Kill Regulations by Doing Nothing

Rep. Marcy Toepel (R-Montgomery), Republican Caucus Chair, alerted members of her Caucus that the House will debate a

package of five Republican bills giving the General Assembly authority to kill regulations by doing nothing and creating new bureaucracies taking permit reviews away from DEP, putting a cap on the number of regulations, requiring the elimination of two regulations for every new one adopted and setting up a procedure to waive penalties for violations.

The bills include:

- **Killing A Regulation by Doing Nothing:** [House Bill 1237](#) (Keefer-R-York) authorizes the General Assembly to kill an economically significant final regulation from any agency by doing nothing.
- **Taking Permit Reviews Away From DEP, State Agencies Giving It To Third Parties:** [House Bill 1959](#) (Rothman-R-Cumberland) Establishes the Pennsylvania Permit Act which requires agencies to create and develop a navigable online permit tracking system and takes authority to issue certain permits away from state agencies like DEP and creates a new bureaucracy of third-party reviewers. Click [here](#) for more.
- **Cap On Number Of Regulations:** [House Bill 209](#) (Phillips-Hill-R-York): Establishes the Independent Office of the Repealer, a new bureaucracy to undertake an ongoing review of existing regulations; receive and process recommendations; and make recommendations to the General Assembly, the governor, and executive agencies for repeal. It also places a cap on all regulations and requires agencies to delete two regulations for every new regulation agencies seek to adopt. It is modeled after policies adopted by the Trump Administration.
- **Waiving Penalties:** [House Bill 1960](#) (Ellis-R-Butler) which requires each agency to appoint a Regulatory Compliance Officer with the authority to waive fines and penalties if a permit holder "attempts" to comply.
- **Repeal Any Regulation By Resolution:** [House Bill 1792](#) (Benninghoff-R-Mifflin) Gives the General Assembly the ability to repeal any state regulation in effect by a concurrent resolution

by requiring a single vote in the Senate and House. The process is modeled after a federal procedure used by the Trump Administration to repeal regulations ([sponsor summary](#)). Currently, the General Assembly can repeal any regulation by passing a new law which involves a more extensive committee review and several votes each by the Senate and House.

The five bills were reported out of the House State Government Committee in March with only Republican votes.

Source: PA Environmental Digest, 4/16/2018

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