

# STATE WATER PLAN TASK FORCE MEETING

January 6, 2025

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Web-Ex Meeting Minutes

## **Task Force Members Present:**

IDNR – OWR: Wes Cattoor, Megan McKinney, Rick Pohlman, Meg Kelly, Steve Altman, Wei Han, Terra McParland

ISWS: Laura Keefer, Glenn Heistand, Trent Ford

IEPA: Jeff Edstrom, Christine Davis, Scott Twait, Nidhan Singh

IDPH: Brian Cox, Gerrin Check-Butler

IDOT: Brian McCoy

IWRC: Yu-Feng Forrest Lin

IDNR – ORC: Brian Metzke, Brennan Caputo

Agencies not in attendance: DCEO, IPCB, IDOA, IEMA

## **Non-Members Present:**

IDNR – Mines: Mike Tarlton

IERG: Marissa Wesley

Consor Engineering: Peter Mulvaney

## **Welcome**

Wes opened the meeting at 1:30 pm. He reminded us that Loren Wobig, the past chair, has since retired effective December 31, 2024 and the Task Force is currently without a chair.

First, the approval of the past meeting's minutes. Wes opened for comments/concerns and Terra would like to move to approve the minutes. Terra said the word sequestration is spelled wrong in the minutes and would like that noted. (Has since been corrected). Terra approves, Steve seconds, no one is opposed. Motion passed.

Second, legislative issues. Wes asked if anyone had updates for legislative updates regarding water reuse, data centers, or others? Steve said he met with several stakeholders in December and while nothing was finalized, MWRD is very interested in continuing the discussion. There was discussion about the new PSI Quantum facility going in up there. Another call is planned for January.

Brian Cox said he has a minor concern with water reuse, the language is very broad and generalized. One of IDPH's jobs is investigation of water pathogens. Legionnaires is frequently tied to these outbreaks and that is one of the main concerns that IDPH has regarding water reuse. These cooling plants can sometimes be seen to be tied to outbreaks of things such as Legionnaires. Wes asked did anyone else have concerns? Rick P. spoke up and said that a pilot project in Columbus, OH has

established a comprehensive water reuse system there. The system there consists of industrial parks that are pre-plumbed for this type of waste and recycled water and that part of their infrastructure is established before they move in. Those efforts are being monitored. Wes says he had heard that IL might be behind the curve in passing these legislative issues, but it was something to be aware of.

Scott Twait for EPA said the in the Columbus, OH example, the water goes back to the municipality and their wastewater treatment and is not discharged into a receiving stream. There are standards in place for that water being reintroduced. That's where IL could differ. Brian Cox spoke up again that there are model codes that currently exist with water quality standards, but it does not address cooling waters, and those model codes should be taken into account. Several places are trying pilot programs. But it doesn't apply strictly to wastewater. Wes asked for anything questions or comments before moving into bylaw review. None heard.

## **BYLAW REVIEW and DISCUSSION**

Wes brought up the by law document that was shared with people on the task force and should currently be on the screen. The primary issues follow a lot of legislative language. But then it becomes a about how do we want to govern the task force? Wes opened it up for comments about the opening language of the introduction. Brian Cox says the Dept of Transportation is in twice. That will be corrected. So that will make 10 votes. Brian suggested that the Chair only be the deciding vote in the interest of a tie vs IDNR getting "two votes". Wes says the Chair is the representation of the task force and that IDNR is unique in that we have different departments who can all weigh in. But they won't all have a vote. Originally, when this was first suggested, Water Resources was under IDOT, whereas now they are under IDNR. Wes says his opinion that DNR OWR and DNR ORCP should each have their own as they both have a strong involvement in policy. Pete Mulvaney says he wants to clarify that the Chair only votes in the interest of a tie. Brian says that is correct that he wants to make sure the power doesn't all lie with IDNR. Wes says in other government bodies he's been in, the Chair normally does have a vote. Wes stated that Loren, in the past, has suggested vote be by topic lead, to make sure those that are participating in the critical issues have the votes. But Wes feels it may swing it too far one way as multiple agencies have some of these topics.

Laura with ISWS says she feels like the SWPTF is not just the critical issues, its drought response, flood response, things that we can plan for but things we need to act on but are different from the Plan. Are we specifically talking about voting in regard to things the Plan body does? Wes agrees that there would likely be subcommittees in place, but we have some of these things in place and who could also have a strong impact and opinion and may need to be considered for a vote.

Wei says he agrees with Laura, it might be better, but we may leave that to each committee to decide. Wes wasn't sure that the task force would be able to approve the committee. Wei suggested each topic could have its own committee. Then those ideas could be brought by the committee to the Task Force for voting. Jeff E. from IEPA wanted to know what type of votes would be brought up? We have topics under all the main topics, and they usually follow statutory ability. Laura says if a critical issue needs to be removed or added, she could see the Task Force being used for that. Jeff says anywhere it says, "the Task Force shall...." should be voted on by the entire committee.

Wei says he'd like to have an approval of a topic report. Each section should have a report outside of the State Plan. Rick says he's looking at the Act and there's a section on recommendations and we're

starting to identify specific modifications or new legislation, funding proposals; those things should be voted on. If we're beginning to look externally or do modifications of policies, we'd want consensus on those policies or changes. Terra asked do we see the Task Force reviewing policy or just voting on them. Rick says the Act states that those things can be evaluated so he would think there would be reviews and consensus.

Pete shared an experience that a board he was on the Chair only voted if there was a tie. So, in this case, the Chair is a member of the Board but has different responsibilities.

The Chair also helps set what the quorum is going to be. If there are 10 agency members, then a quorum is 5. If there are 11, then the quorum is 6. DCEO for instance, hasn't been seen on this call since 2016. Those who show a vested interest should be allowed to have the vote for the quorum. Rick suggested mimicking the Act minus the double reference with IDOT. Wes asked if everyone is in agreement with the way it is now? That IDNR would not be a part of the quorum, there would need to be 6 of 11, including IDNR as they are always the Chair of the meeting.

Wes says he will make updates and send this draft document out for further discussion and revision. Terra says she's fine with the way it is, but is there something in the bylaws that if they want a representation and a vote, they attend at least 50% of the meetings? If they are listed as one of the 10, they should make the strongest effort to attend. Wes says the purpose of this representation is that there will only be one vote per Agency. He says there may not be a way to force attendance or participation. Rick says the Agencies who haven't strongly participated in the past may change their level of participation in the future. Pete suggests raising the quorum to something higher as votes are important and if there is only 10, there should be more than just 5 voting. Based on today's meeting only, several Agencies are not even online today. If we voted today, we barely have 5 of the 10 needed.

Laura says if we have to do voting, that could be placed in the agenda, and it might improve attendance to meet quorum. Laura thinks 6 is sufficient. Wes says following "Roberts' Rules of Order" was suggested as a template to use for meetings. Does anyone disagree with using these? Laura says she on a different meeting and everyone is in agreement to use Robert's Rules of Order. Another suggestion was a "deputy topic leader" for each topic and that that role would also be voted on, but Wes has some concerns as he sometimes has trouble getting updates on topics. Putting a secondary person on may or may not help. Laura wanted to know if this was born out of the initial start when topics were being discussed and implemented. Wes said in a way, that this was also suggested just as a suggestion. Jeff said he doesn't think it really necessary. Some of these are very Agency specific and could impede more than help. Someone else suggested it should be similar as it is now. If the Agency isn't on board, it could be deputized to someone else, and we seem to have a grasp on that now. Rick said he does not see the inherent need for a deputy. The consensus seems to be let the topic lead designate someone else in their absence. If someone is unavailable, allow someone else from the similar agency with knowledge speak on it. The language could be cleaned up later.

#### **SWP Recommendations Status:**

Wes asked everyone to please continue to make updates.

1. *Water Quality* – Jeff says IEPA is in the process of moving to the old White Oaks Mall and they are currently fielding several requests for funding. The new labs are starting up and are better with data management.
2. *Climate Section*- Trent is in place of Dave. The first recommendation is increasing the monitoring sites, they are beginning to gain transaction. They are working toward a federal earmark. They are expanding and ideally going to 102 from 19 currently. They also currently got some NOAA funds to begin a future data climate group. The atmospheric group is expanding.
3. *Integrated Water Management*- Loren has since retired and will be returning on a 75-day contract at a later date. These responsibilities haven't been handed off yet.
4. *Long Term Funding*- Nidhan says that Gary Bingenheimer has since retired, so he is the state revolving fund manager. His team is also in the process of moving.
5. *Water Sustainability*- Wei says IDNR has executed an agreement with Tri-County Regional Committee for water planning activities for the IL Region and we continue discussion of the water supply planning. Rend Lake and Heartland Water Conservancy conversations continue regarding water sustainability plans in Big Muddy River bottoms. They have also completed task two of the water accountability with the IL State Water Survey.
6. *Lake Michigan*- Meg says there are two proposals with NOAA that are moving along and will work on coastal restoration. They are also working on getting more grants and getting those proposals sent out for consideration.
7. *Flood Damage Mitigation*- One of the first recommendations was developing a new bulletin for rainfall and its impacts when they do modeling and measuring impacts. That will likely be published in the next few months. They have also made a request to IAFSM to present and market that new bulletin for those projected rainfalls during the IAFSM annual conference in March.
8. *Aquatic and Riparian Habitat*- Brian had no updates.
9. *Water Use Laws and Regulations*- Steve says the water reuse act was passed. There is a draft of administrative rule regarding permitting in a floodplain. Any state agency that is building within the floodplain, is going to be required to get a permit from OWR. IL is the first state to enact this. Part 3700 (construction in floodways) is still under draft to go to JCAR over the summer.
10. *Navigation*- Brian is on the call. With the water resource management act, inland waterways match is going up 10% to 35% and is making money available for infrastructure. One is in Hennepin and one is at Hardin Elevator Terminal. A grant workshop was held. IL EPA is tracking a grant for port districts and is going to be going to IL International Port district in Chicago. The dredge material has a new goal of 70%.
11. *Erosion and Sedimentation*- No one available.
12. *Data Management*- Laura says she has no current updates.
13. *Recreation*- Michael isn't on, however Brennan from Fisheries is. The mobile app is being redesigned and is due to go into effect in June and the website for July.

Wes reminded the leads that now is the time to check for duplicate recommendations and rework or reword anything that just isn't working or isn't tracking. Also note that we are in the process of preparing the yearly update for the General Assembly so if you have any updates to the implementation progress, please send them to Wes as soon as possible for inclusion in the year end report.

## New Business & Public Comments

Forrest posted a link to the cannabis research and said it does involve water reuse.

**Closing:** Hopefully next meeting there can be some more opinions and narrowing down of the bylaws.

### Schedule:

Future Meetings: **April 7, 2025- 1:30 PM – virtual**

**July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025- 1:30 PM- virtual**

**October 6, 2025- in person (TBD)**