

**INTERSTATE COMMISSION ON THE POTOMAC RIVER BASIN
SECTION FOR COOPERATIVE WATER SUPPLY OPERATIONS
ON THE POTOMAC RIVER (CO-OP)**

**SECOND QUARTER FY2024
MARCH 12, 2024**

**VIRTUAL MEETING
ROCKVILLE, MD**

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Robert Sussman called the Second Quarter FY2024 CO-OP Section Meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. on March 12, 2024. The following Commissioners, staff, and guests attended the meeting in whole or in part.

Commissioners

United States

Robert Sussman (Chair, Commissioner)
Darryl Madden (Commissioner)

District of Columbia

Willem Brakel (Commissioner)
James Tsai (Alt. Commissioner)
Tiffany Potter (Commissioner)
Hamid Karimi (Alt. Commissioner)
Kimberly L. Jones (Alternate
Commissioner)

Maryland

Lee Currey (Alt. Commissioner)
Birthe Kjellerup (Commissioner)

Virginia

Scott Morris (Alt. Commissioner)
Paul Holland (Commissioner)

West Virginia

Mindy Neil (Alt. Commissioner)

Pennsylvania

Susan Weaver (Alt. Commissioner)
Chris Kimple (Alt. Commissioner)

Staff

Michael Nardolilli (Executive Director)
Cherie Schultz (Dir., CO-OP Operations)
Renee Bourassa (Director of
Communications)
Laurel Glenn (Director of Administration)
Heidi Moltz (Director of Program
Operations)
Claire Buchanan (Director Emerita)
Carlington Wallace (Associate Director,
Water Resources)
Serena Moncion (Outreach Program Manager)
Sarah Ahmed (Senior Water Resources
Engineer Analyst)
Alimatou Seck (Senior Water Resources
Scientist)

Guests

Megan Jadrosich (USACE)
Matt Cosby (Chief of Staff for
BG Lloyd - USACE)
Anne Spiesman (Fairfax Water)
Andrea Reese (Potomac Conservancy)
Owen Nearhoof (FBI)

1. WELCOME, ROLL CALL, AND INTRODUCTIONS

Commissioner Robert Sussman, Chair of the CO-OP Section, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Meeting attendees were instructed to record their attendance utilizing the “Chat” feature in TEAMS.

2. ADOPTION OR MODIFICATION OF DRAFT AGENDA

Commissioner Sussman asked if there were any additions or modifications to the agenda that anyone would like to propose, and there were none. **Commissioner Karimi made a motion to approve the agenda, and this was seconded by Commissioner Madden. All were in favor.**

3. MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 15, 2023

Commissioner Sussman asked if there were any comments or corrections to the December minutes, which appear under Tab 3, Attachment 2 of the Commission Meeting Book. **A motion to adopt the December 15, 2023, minutes as circulated was made by Commissioner Karimi and was seconded by Commissioner Potter. All were in favor.**

4. OLD BUSINESS

A. Follow-up on December 2023 Action Items: Dr. Schultz reported on the following December meeting agenda items that required follow-up:

- Commissioner Tsai requested that the DEIJ text that was going to be included in a summary of the economic impact studies be provided to the DEIJ Committee for review. Dr. Schultz said that the DEIJ language had not yet been drafted and that the process is ongoing.
- There was discussion regarding the cost share for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) feasibility study on a secondary water source. Dr. Schultz stated that this will be a long-term discussion, so a determination has not been made.
- Commissioner Seltzer requested that a brief summary of the proposed modifications to the Low Flow Allocation Agreement (LFAA) be prepared. Commissioner McCabe prepared this, and it was distributed to all members of the LFAA Workgroup.

B. Section’s Quarterly Report

- Dr. Schultz reviewed the CO-OP Section’s Second Quarter activities, which are described in detail in the Section’s Quarterly Report, available in Tab 3, Attachment 3 of the Commission Meeting Book. Highlights of Dr. Schultz’s brief was:
- Dr. Schultz provided an overview and a current outlook for the hydrological conditions in the Basin by presenting several maps prepared by the Middle Atlantic River Forecast Center. She reviewed the drought conditions from the summer and fall months of 2023 and reported that since then, improvements have occurred, with the Potomac watershed’s past 365-day precipitation deficit having been reduced from 18% to just 9%. Also, precipitation during this past winter has been well above historical averages which is significant since the winter rainfall recharges the groundwater and so even if the Basin has a dry summer, the winter recharge will hopefully prevent the need for water supply releases in the coming season.

- The CO-OP Operations Committee met on February 29, 2024.
- The kickoff meeting for the 2025 Water Supply Study was on February 27th, 2024. Data requests were sent out and the CO-OP Team continues to work on the planning model, PRRISM, that will support the new study.
- The Supplemental Storage Working Group (SSWG) had their quarterly meeting on January 24th, 2024, when it was announced that two briefing papers from the ICPRB funded economic impact study were completed. The two briefing papers are:
 - The Economic & Fiscal Costs of Water Supply Disruption to the National Capital Region
 - Disruptions in Water Supply and Its Threat to National Security
- A team has been formed, including both Public Information Officers and appropriate technical staff, to disseminate information on the study and to create press releases, potential op-eds, and follow-up briefings with Congressional offices and stakeholders. Since the briefing paper on “Disruptions in Water Supply and Its Threat to National Security” is considered sensitive, the study rollout team will be focused on preparing a special high-level summary that will be appropriate for public dissemination. Dr. Schultz also noted that both briefing papers contain a DEIJ component which will be highlighted in the summary. The first meeting of the rollout team will be on March 20th, 2024.
- In response to Dr. Schultz’ summary of the completed studies, Commissioners Brakel, Sussman, and Madden all expressed their excitement about these studies finally being completed. They acknowledged the hard work, dedication, and commitment that it took to complete this undertaking. Commissioner Brakel emphasized the need to be strategic in our approach to disseminating the information to the public to ensure the report contents receive the attention and interest it should. For example, he suggested targeting World Water Day.
- Several CO-OP sponsored projects on seasonal forecasting are either completed or winding down: the new water supply outlook model is completed and under review. CO-OP is waiting for the final report on the coupled Potomac watershed runoff and groundwater model project.
- CO-OP is preparing for the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) National Capital Region Oil Spill Exercise scheduled on March 21, 2024. Dr. Alimatou Seck of ICPRB conducted all the modeling to create the scenario for this upcoming event.
- Dr. Schultz provided a detailed brief on CO-OP’s meeting with the Frederick County Maryland’s Office of Division of Water and Sewer Utilities on March 5 as it relates to the influx of data centers to the greater Washington metropolitan area. Frederick County requested a meeting with CO-OP to discuss a large master planned data center community of over 2,100 acres being planned in Frederick County called “Quantum Frederick.” Since data centers utilize substantial amounts of energy, fiber optics and water for cooling and processing of data, Frederick County reached out to CO-OP as the Maryland consumptive use regulations are applicable and such a data center will most likely require low flow mitigation.

- Commissioner Currey from Maryland said he was glad Frederick County had reached out to CO-OP and expressed the importance of compliance with consumptive use regulations and the need to have a plan in place for water replenishment should a low flow event occur in the future due to drought.
- Dr. Schultz briefed a proposal by Pennsylvania State University, Howard University and ICPRB to the National Science Foundation to conduct a study titled: “*Climate-proofing communities against water shortages by co-producing a stakeholder-oriented smart data-model fusion system.*” She shared that this is a \$2.5 million proposal with the objective of improving drought decision-making and resilience by way of machine learning, and enhancements to Penn State's recently completed Potomac watershed runoff and groundwater model. Overall, if the study is approved, the result will be enhanced decision-making capabilities for both the CO-OP and upstream communities in Loudoun, Frederick, Leesburg, and Berkeley counties in Virginia and West Virginia.

C. Kickoff of the 2025 Water Supply Study

Sarah Ahmed from the CO-OP Team provided a detailed brief on the 2025 Water Supply Study, which is required every five years by the Water Supply Coordination Agreement and the LFAA.

D. Efforts to secure Federal funding for supplemental storage.

Nardolilli briefed Commissioners on Congress passing HR 4366 (the Consolidated Appropriations Act) on March 8 which contained an earmark for the U.S Army Corps of Engineers in the amount of \$500,000 for the supplemental storage feasibility study. He reminded everyone that this \$500,000 will not cover the full cost of the study, which is expected to be about \$3 million. ICPRB has sent thank you letters to each of the Congressional offices who facilitated passage of this appropriation. Nardolilli noted that the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and the water suppliers have been working for several years in coordination with the Supplemental Storage Working Group (SSWG), to obtain Congressional approval. He also informed Commissioners that Congresswoman Norton from the District of Columbia is submitting a proposal in the near term to have the Federal government fund 100% of the study. COG is planning a meeting in the March 18-25th timeframe to discuss the next steps once the funding is actually received. Nardolilli thanked all the ICPRB Commissioners for their work in obtaining these funds and stated that their support was very instrumental in this success.

Commissioner Sussman asked if Nardolilli knew if the study would be started this fiscal year and he responded he was unsure but that would be determined at the next steps meeting later this month. Commissioner Brakel asked if the actual language of the bill could be forwarded to the Executive Committee for review and Nardolilli confirmed he would do this.

E. LFAA Next steps

Commissioner Sussman provided an update to the Commissioners about the proposed LFAA Modification next steps. As background, he reminded meeting participants about the work the LFAA Workgroup completed last year to update the provisions of the agreement and create a path forward to future iterations of the flow by requirements. The current plan is to obtain approval of the proposed LFAA amendments by the four governing parties (the federal government, the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia). The initial plan was to get final approval at the upcoming April LFAA annual meeting but that will not occur as the jurisdictions are in various stages of reviewing

the proposed amendments. On a positive note, Commissioner Sussman stated that there has been a very active dialogue with the attorneys at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and as a result, CO-OP has updated some of the LFAA language on the environmental flow-by to address the USACE concerns. Commissioner Sussman is optimistic that a final agreement will be reached in the coming months. He also expressed appreciation for all the work that Commissioner McCabe has done to keep the LFAA project on track and moving forward.

F. Financial Statement

Dr. Schultz stated that CO-OP is on budget and on track.

5. NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Schultz initiated a discussion on how the CO-OP would need additional funding in the coming years. As background, she outlined the tasks that CO-OP has historically been responsible for: water supply studies, supporting drought operations and promoting regional cooperation. In recent years, the CO-OP has also been involved in studies and projects that address requirements for secondary storage locations and updating agreements that support the regional water supply system. She shared that these projects are all very important, but they do require additional manpower. ICPRB has provided supplemental funding to CO-OP to cover new projects that are not currently funded by traditional CO-OP revenue streams; however, this is not sustainable. Commissioner Karimi sought clarification on if Dr. Schultz was specifically asking for the jurisdictions to contribute more funding or if she was looking for manpower solutions for the CO-OP Staff that could potentially come from the Commissioner members. Dr. Schultz responded that CO-OP needs additional funding. Further discussion ensued among Commissioners as to where the additional funding could come from and how the process would work. Nardolilli stated that some of the projects CO-OP engages in are not endeavors the water suppliers are interested in funding. He noted that the amount of money contributed by the signatory jurisdictions has been flat since 2010. He suggested two ways that additional funding for CO-OP could move forward:

- Reach out to the jurisdictions and try to create new payment arrangements whereby CO-OP's funding is adjusted for inflation, so CO-OP has essentially the same "buying power" as it did in 2010.
- Or create a one-time increase to support a new staff position to address the additional project work that CO-OP has taken on in recent years.

Nardolilli shared that the Executive Committee discussed this issue at its most recent meeting on March 11 and the goal is to have a plan for FY26 shortly.

6. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, **Commissioner Karimi moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Potter seconded the motion. All were in favor.** The meeting was adjourned at 9:36 a.m.

- Minutes drafted by Laurel D. Glenn, Director of Administration
- Edited by Cherie Schultz, Director, CO-OP Operations
- Approved by Michael Nardolilli, Executive Director