

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

FIRST QUARTER FY2025

DECEMBER 17, 2024

VIRTUAL MEETING

ROCKVILLE, MD

DRAFT MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Robert Sussman called the FY2025 First Quarter CO-OP Section Meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. on December 17, 2024. The following Commissioners, staff, and guests attended the meeting in whole or in part.

Commissioners

United States

Robert Sussman, Commissioner

District of Columbia

Willem Brakel, Commissioner

Tiffany Potter, Commissioner

Steve Saari, Commissioner

James Tsai, Alt. Commissioner

Kimberly L. Jones, Alt. Commissioner

Hamid Karimi, Alt. Commissioner

Maryland

Birthe Kjellerup, Commissioner

Lee Curry, Alt. Commissioner

Pennsylvania

Sue Weaver, Alt. Commissioner

Chris Kimple, Alt. Commissioner

Virginia

Kathy Tran, Commissioner

Paul Holland, Commissioner

Scott Morris, Alt. Commissioner

Mark Peterson, Alt. Commissioner

Staff

Michael Nardolilli, Executive Director

Cherie Schultz, Dir. CO-OP Operations

Heidi Moltz, Dir. Program Operations

Mike Selckmann, Assoc. Dir. Aquatic Habitats

Laurel Glenn, Dir. Administration

Renee Bourassa, Dir. Communications

Alimatou Seck, Sr. Water Resources Scientist

Sarah Ahmed, Sr. Water Resource Engineer Analyst

Serena Moncion, Outreach Program Manager

Lily Bedwell, Administrative Coordinator

Renee Thompson, Water Resources Planner

Rick Masters, General Council

Guests

Duke Adams, Pennsylvania DEP

Jason Minnich, Pennsylvania DEP

Anne Spiesman, Fairfax Water

Megan Jadrosich, USACE

Joseph Chandler, USACE

Chris Penney, USACE

Joel Caudill, WSSC

Brandon Lewis, Office of DC Open Government

1. WELCOME, ROLL CALL, AND INTRODUCTIONS

Executive Director Michael Nardolilli asked participants to annotate their names and affiliations in the chat box of the meeting for roll call. Participants were advised that the meeting was being recorded for note-taking purposes. He certified there was a quorum and turned the meeting over to Chairman Sussman for introductions and welcoming remarks. Chairman Sussman welcomed everyone to the First Quarter Meeting of FY2025.

2. ADOPTION OR MODIFICATION OF THE AGENDA

Chairman Sussman asked meeting attendees for modifications to and approval of the agenda. None were suggested, so the Chairman requested a motion to approve. **Commissioner Karimi made a motion to approve the agenda which was seconded by Commissioner Potter. All were in favor and the agenda was approved.**

3. MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 10, 2024, CO-OP SECTION MEETING

Chairman Sussman asked meeting attendees for modifications to and approval of the minutes from the previous meeting. None were suggested, so the Chairman requested a motion to approve. **A motion to adopt the minutes from September 10, 2024, was made by Commissioner Karimi and was seconded by Commissioner Potter. All were in favor and the minutes were approved.**

4. OLD BUSINESS

A. Follow-up on September Action Items

- **CO-OP attended the 2024 American Geophysical Union meeting in Washington, D.C.** where Dr. Schultz gave a presentation at a meeting session and Dr. Seck's two interns presented their research posters; Dr. Schultz stated that she felt CO-OP was well represented.

B. Section's Quarterly Report on Water Supply Coordination Agreement

Drought Response

- Drought worsened in the mid-Atlantic region since September 10, 2024, extending the drought from basin wide to region wide. Dr. Schultz presented maps showing the change in drought conditions from September 10, 2024, to December 12, 2024. Much of the basin is now in moderate or severe drought based on US Drought Monitor classifications. She expressed her hope that the present conditions of precipitation will alleviate the current conditions of severe and moderate drought.

- This fall, Potomac River flows at the US Geological Survey's Point of Rocks, MD gage have been often near CO-OP daily monitoring threshold of 2000 cubic feet per second with an outlier from a heavy October rainfall event at above 40,000 cubic feet per second.
- Dr. Schultz stated that this system status is typical for this time of year and there was plenty of water in the river to meet demands plus the environmental flow-by at Little Falls dam. The winter Potomac withdrawals by the metropolitan area suppliers are about 325 million gallons per day and the Potomac River flow has been close to and often well above 1,700 million gallons per day. Dr. Schultz briefed that reservoirs will most likely fill by the start of summer, and she anticipates that they will meet the Water Supply Coordination Agreement's target of 90% full on June 1. Jennings Randolph water quality storage is currently somewhat low at about 40% full and Patuxent is about 30% full. She said that these both generally fill in the winter season. She stated that if the dry conditions continue throughout the winter, there will be little replenishment of the bedrock aquifer groundwater that could set us up for a potentially difficult summer. With good winter aquifer recharge, there will be little cause for concern. Commissioner Karimi asked Dr. Schultz if the low rainfall has any indication of future unusual patterns in relation to climate change, and she responded that conditions are not abnormal or unusual for the fall season.

2025 Water Supply Study

- CO-OP completed the draft annual demand forecasts and the verification of the new PRRISM model. PRRISM needed to be updated due to changes in the physical system, operational policy, and software/computational capabilities.
- Items still in progress are the development of stochastic daily demand models, new forecasts of upstream consumptive use, projections of impacts of data centers, and downloading/analysis of new climate projections.
- Commissioner Karimi asked about the datasets used to update PRRISM climate change projections and Dr. Schultz shared that CO-OP has downloaded the NASA Earth Exchange Global Daily Downscaled Projections Dataset. CO-OP submitted a manuscript to the Journal of the American Water Resource Association for publication that outlines their methodology and Dr. Schultz said she would share that with Commissioners Karimi and Jones, per their requests.
- Dr. Schultz stated that the Potomac LIDAR Bathymetric data project has entered Phase 3. Phase 3 is funded jointly by ICPRB and USGS. The resulting fine resolution bathymetric elevation datasets allow ICPRB to do two- and three-dimensional flow modeling which is useful for spill modeling and possibly support USACE operations of the Jennings Randolph reservoir. The LIDAR data now extends from Washington, D.C. near the Little Falls gage to the Jennings Randolph dam, with a gap that could be closed with Phase 4 extending from Hancock to Cumberland. Funding is needed for Phase 4.

- Executive Director Nardolilli addressed Commissioner Karimi’s question about funding for covering the Phase 4 gap, stating that ICPRB is looking for possible sources through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law or the Inflation Reduction Act.

C. Update on Consumptive Use by Data Centers

- Dr. Seck presented the CO-OP research on data centers and their water consumption for cooling methods. CO-OP’s estimated upstream use that is not returned to the river by the hydrologic cycle is known as consumptive use.
- CO-OP seeks to evaluate the upstream use of data centers, understand their potential growth in the Potomac River Basin, and develop projections of their consumptive use patterns through 2050. So far, CO-OP has conducted interviews with water utilities and state agencies, reviewed and analyzed studies on data centers and trends, assessed baseline data center upstream consumptive use, and identified methods for developing projections.
- Virginia hosts over 30% of the world’s hyperscale data centers. Currently existing and planned data centers are concentrated just west of Washington, D.C. and in Northern Virginia.
- Dr. Seck illustrated the expected data center growth in the post-pandemic setting to be exponential based on the increase of video conferencing, streaming services, and online gaming, as well as the increased adoption of artificial intelligence services.
- CO-OP will refine estimates and develop projections for data center water use and subsequently integrate the refined data into the PRRISM model. Dr. Seck shared that CO-OP will also share findings with local agencies and stakeholders.

D. LFAA Next Steps

Due to time constraints, Chairman Sussman asked Dr. Schultz what action items were most efficient to cover in the remaining minutes of the CO-OP section meeting. Since the ICPRB Business Meeting would cover LFAA Next Steps, it was decided to skip this agenda item.

E. Financial Statement

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

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. USACE Feasibility Study on a secondary water source for the region

Due to time constraints, Chairman Sussman allowed several minutes to address the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Feasibility Study. Mr. Nardolilli reminded the group that more detail would be provided in the Business Meeting.

- Mr. Nardolilli shared that the feasibility study is on track. The USACE and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) signed a cost share

agreement in September 2024 which initiated the three-year/three-million-dollar study on ways to fortify the D.C. area water supply against contamination events and drought. Congresswoman Norton (D-D.C.) had been modifying the language in the cost share split agreement between the federal government and non-federal partners represented by MWCOG from the precedented 50/50 federal/non-federal cost share to 90% federal and 10% non-federal.

- The House Committee report indicated the importance of a secondary water source for the Nation's capital and national security. USACE was directed to implement the new cost-sharing agreement, Section 1351, without delaying the ongoing study. The Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA) passed the House with a vote of 399 to 18, and on December 16, 2024, the Senate invoked cloture. At the time of the CO-OP Section meeting, the Senate was to vote on WRDA, and it should be prepared for approval by the President by the end of the week (December 20, 2024). Congress had already appropriated \$500,000 for the study. The Energy and Water Development Act bill HR8997 included an extra \$600,000. Mr. Nardolilli stated that ICPRB is now waiting for the release of the continuing resolution bill.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Sussman asked for a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Karimi made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Commissioner Potter and all were in favor.** Commissioner Sussman called the CO-OP Section meeting to a close at 9:30 a.m. and reminded the group that the Business Meeting portion would begin at 9:45 a.m.

- Minutes drafted by Lily Bedwell, Administrative Coordinator
- Edited by Dr. Cherie Schultz, Director, CO-OP Operations
- Approved by Michael Nardolilli, Executive Director