

Drinking Water Advisory Committee (DWAC)

Kickoff Meeting
September 19, 2001
9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Verne Riffe Center, Conf. Rm. 1917

Executive Summary

The kickoff meeting of the Drinking Water Advisory Committee (DWAC) began shortly after 9:30 a.m. Mike Baker, Chief, Division of Drinking and Ground Waters (DDAGW), welcomed the attendees, introduced the division staff and DWAC coordinators, followed by a roundtable introduction of the meeting attendees. The division staff and DWAC coordinators are: Kirk Leifheit, Asst. Environmental Administrator, Beth Messer, Environmental Manager/Compliance Assurance Section, Mark Sheahan, Environmental Supervisor/Rule Implementation & Development, Vicki Saunders, Public Information Specialist/Rule Implementation & Development.

Key Meeting Agenda Issues Discussed

A. Brief Overview of the Drinking Water Advisory Committee

Mike Baker explained the main purpose of forming a drinking water advisory committee as seeking interested party advise on issues affecting the Ohio EPA's and Ohio's public water systems' efforts to ensure Ohio's citizens have access to adequate supplies of safe drinking water. DDAGW administers a number of programs and is the primary enforcement authority to implement the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) in Ohio. As a result of the 1996 Amendments to SDWA, at least 13 new or revised rules will be developed and adopted for the Drinking Water Program. DWAC will play a large part in this rules process. DWAC will focus on three main areas: 1) providing input on rules development, 2) assessing and recommending improvements to existing programs and 3) identifying funding alternatives to address state and local funding needs.

B. DDAGW Overview

Kirk Leifheit gave a brief slide presentation on DDAGW. The presentation covered SDWA, the division's mission and vision, major program activities, funding sources, public water systems, rules, and long-term goals and strategies.

C. Draft DWAC Procedures

Vicki Saunders gave a brief slide presentation on Draft DWAC Procedures. Beth Messer explained the purpose of the draft procedures. The draft procedures are pending final division approval. The presentation covered areas such as committee purpose, roles and responsibilities, consensus and membership. DWAC attendees were given a hard copy of the draft DWAC procedures as part of an information kit. The kit also included fact sheets, a news release, slide handouts, meeting agenda, division information, and a drinking water glossary.

D. Future Goals and Objectives

1. Rule Status Update

Mark Sheahan gave a brief slide presentation titled "Rules and Ripples." The presentation covered 1996 Amendments to SDWA and how the rules will impact Ohio. The federal rules require new and stronger contamination prevention approaches, better information for consumers, regulatory improvements and new funding for states and communities. Included in the presentation was the Ohio EPA current and future rules status (e.g. state primacy requirements, consumer confidence reports, operator certification guidelines, enhanced surface water treatment rule/disinfectants/disinfection byproducts rule, public notification, radon, radionuclides, arsenic).

2. DWAC Long-term Plans

Mike Baker gave a brief overview of DWAC/DDAGW Short and Long-term Plans:

- Federal Rule Development
At the federal level, influence is the key to what a final rule will look like and DWAC input early in the rule development process can impact federal outcome. That process involves DDAGW providing DWAC overviews of draft or proposed rules with the division's initial comments, then getting DWAC input and advice.
- State Rule Development
After USEPA finalizes a rule, DDAGW forms internal rule workgroups. Mike would like the workgroups to bring issues to DWAC for input and/or direct involvement; seek interested party advice through DWAC organizations and follow-up with organizations once a rule is finalized.
- Program Implementation
There are program implementation issues that must be addressed once rules are finalized. It may be necessary to create program guidelines or policies for which DWAC would also provide input, as with the rules process.
- Workload Adjustments/Prioritization
Implementing new programs will require making adjustments to staff, existing programs and helping public water systems comply with new requirements. DWAC can help DDAGW prioritize the workload and maintain internal program balance. To achieve this, DWAC will be asked to consider staffing and funding issues that are necessary to administer new and existing programs.
- Education Training & Technical Assistance
DWAC can query constituents on how the rules impact them and what technical assistance they need to help them comply; determine the financial constraints to public water systems as a result of rules; find funding alternatives at state or federal levels.
- Funding
DWAC will play an important role in helping to establish the budget for DDAGW. Over the next year, DWAC will be researching state and local funding alternatives.
- Budget
DDAGW plans to start the budget planning process in February or March 2002

with proposals finalized by next year. The General Assembly is requiring Ohio EPA to develop a zero based budget. Mike could not provide a definition for zero based budget, but made it clear that the agency budget will be highly scrutinized.

- Current/Future Budget Status
DDAGW will have serious financial concerns at the end of this biennium budget compared to the last one. Fees comprise a majority of DDAGW budget. Over the last several years, the revenue generated by fees has decreased and operating costs increased. The substantial cash balance that accumulated once the fees were passed, was due to the lengthy hiring process. The cost to hire an FTE now has more than doubled since the fees were first put in place. The cash balance will be gone at the end of this biennium. To maintain the current level of staffing, DDAGW will need to look at additional funding sources. A short term goal for DWAC is to help evaluate DDAGW budget and future program needs, and find funding options.
- Local Needs
Current program requirements are burdensome for public water systems owners. New requirements will only complicate the matter. DWAC can help assess the funding needs for public water systems and find additional funding resources.

E. Open Discussion

Time constraints did not permit a formal open discussion. But, there were a few, impromptu comments after Mike's closing remarks from some attendees about issues like how are subdivision drinking water systems categorized (i.e. community water system), state rules meeting a set percentage of federal rules, state rules "going beyond" or being more stringent than federal rules, the burden early implementation of rules may place on OEPA, and how federal rules are "one size fits all" but states' drinking water quality issues are not the same.

F. Closing Remarks

Mike sees the role of DWAC as helping DDAGW to accomplish the issues discussed in the meeting and contributing to the human health and economic well being of the State of Ohio.

The next DWAC meeting is scheduled for Nov. 20, from 9:30 a.m. to Noon, in the OEPA.

DWAC Attendees:

Sue Daly, PUCO
Garry Cole, Ohio Campground Owners Association
Kimberly McConville, Association of Ohio Health Commissioners
Rex Littrell, Ohio Manufactured Homes Association
Larry Bicking, Ohio Public Works Commission
Patti Eshman, Ohio Homebuilders Association
Kristin Woodall, Ohio Rural Community Assistance Program
Steve Grossman, Ohio Water Development Authority
John Sadzewicz, Ohio Consulting Engineers Council
J.C. Walker, Ohio Rural Water Association
Frances Beasley, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission
Brad Biggs, Ohio Dept. of Development
Marvin Gnagy, Jr., Ohio American Water Works Association
Curtis L. Truss, Jr., Operator Training Committee of Ohio, Inc.

