

**INTERSTATE COMMISSION ON THE POTOMAC RIVER BASIN
THIRD QUARTER CO-OP SECTION MEETING FY2025
JUNE 17, 2025**

**VIRTUAL MEETING, ROCKVILLE, MD
APPROVED MINUTES**

Call to Order: Executive Director Michael Nardolilli called the CO-OP Section Meeting to order at 8:30 am on June 17, 2025. The following commissioners, staff, and guests attended the meeting in whole or in part.

Commissioners

District of Columbia

Willem Brakel (*)
Tiffany M. Potter
Hamid Karimi (a)

Maryland

Randy K. Rowel, Jr. (a)
Birthe V. Kjellerup

Pennsylvania

Chris Ann Kimple (a)

United States

Robert Sussman (*)
Darryl J. Madden
Amy M. Guise (a)

Virginia

Del. Kathy Tran
W. Weedon Cloe III (a*)
Mark E. Peterson (a)

(a) - Alternate Commissioner
(*) – Executive Committee

Staff

Michael Nardolilli, Executive Director
Richard Masters, General Council
Renee Bourassa, Director of Communications
Cherie Schultz, Director of CO-OP Operations
Heidi Moltz, Director of Program Operations
Laurel Glenn, Director of Administration
G. Michael Selckmann, Assoc. Dir. Aquatic Habitats
Sarah Ahmed, Senior Water Resources Engineer
Alimatou Seck, Senior Water Resources Scientist
Renee Thompson, Water Resources Planner
Megan McClaugherty, Ecological Technician
Serena Moncion, Community Outreach Manager
Lily Bedwell, Administrative Coordinator
Alyssa Freedman, Water Resources Intern

Guests

Joe Chandler, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
R. Brian Paul, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Duke Adams, Pennsylvania DEP
Christina Davis, Loudoun Water
Anne Spiesman, Fairfax Water
Joel Caudill, WSSC Water

1. Virtual Roll Call via Teams Chat

Ms. Renee Bourassa asked the group to send their names and affiliations in the Teams chat.

2. Welcoming Remarks from Chair Sussman

Chair Sussman welcomed the group to the third quarter CO-OP Section Meeting of fiscal years 2025.

3. Adoption or Modification of Agenda

Chair Sussman asked the Commission for any proposed modifications to the agenda. **Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Potter made a motion which was seconded by Commissioner Karimi. All were in favor, and the agenda was approved as circulated.**

4. Draft Minutes from March 18, 2024

Chair Sussman asked if there were any comments on the draft minutes from the second quarter meeting minutes as circulated. **Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Karimi made a motion to approve, and Commissioner Potter seconded the motion. All were in favor and the minutes were approved.**

5. Old Business

A. Follow-up on March Action Items

CO-OP Director of Operations Dr. Cherie Schultz reminded the group of Commissioner Currey's question from the second quarter meeting about the low level of Savage Reservoir. She speculated that the lack of rain was to blame, and with increased precipitation this quarter, the reservoir level is higher.

B. Section's Quarterly Report

Dr. Schultz reported on CO-OP staff third quarter activities, focusing on drought response and the 2025 water supply study. An unusually wet May has alleviated dry conditions in the Potomac watershed and all but erased the 365-day cumulative past precipitation deficit. Though spring rains are generally not very effective at recharging groundwater, CO-OP staff are cautiously optimistic that the drought has ended. But of course, a significant precipitation shortfall this summer could turn things around again.

Dr. Schultz gave an update on CO-OP's 2025 water supply study, saying that all study "ingredients" have been completed and that PRRISM model runs to assess the performance of the future Washington metropolitan area (WMA) water supply system are being conducted this week. Preliminary results indicated that system performance is predicted to be somewhat worse than it was in the 2020 study. She attributed this to the fact that estimates of future WMA water demand and future upstream consumptive use are both higher in the new study. Commissioner Karimi asked whether the consumptive use of data centers report is actual use or projected use, and Dr. Schultz said that they are projected use for 2050.

The new study uses updated projections of future meteorological change, based on downscaled Coupled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 6 (CMIP6) NEX-DCP30-CMIP6 data, downloaded from a NASA website, and also makes use of historical meteorological data from Oregon State's PRISM project, available since 1896. Dr. Schultz noted that significant time trends in temperature and precipitation have not been detected in the Potomac watershed above Little Falls in past CO-OP analyses, but that with the addition of 2018 through 2023 PRISM data, a statistically significant increase in temperature has been detected for the 2010-2023 time period, as compared with the previous long-term record, and a rising trend in precipitation is present for the period, 1950-2023, based on the non-parametric Mann-Kendall

test. Dr. Schultz also noted that in general the CMIP6 projections are hotter than the CMIP5 projections used in CO-OP's 2020 water supply study.

CO-OP's methodology for estimating the impacts of meteorological change on Potomac watershed streamflows is described in detail in a paper just published by the Journal of the American Water Resources Association, entitled [*Is Hot Drought a Risk in the US Mid-Atlantic? A Potomac Basin Case Study*](#). The 2025 study estimates that Potomac River flows in an extreme drought year in the future period, 2040-2069, will be 13% lower than those experienced in a past extreme drought, which is not as severe as the 16% reduction predicted in the 2020 study.

Preliminary water supply study results were presented for nine plausible planning scenarios being considered in the study. The study considers current and planned resources, Edgemon and Milestone reservoirs, but not alternatives under consideration by the USACE feasibility study. Study results indicate, as was also the case in the 2020 study, a very wide range of potential performance of the WMA water supply system. The potential for system failure in the event of extreme future drought is indicated for five out of nine scenarios in 2045 results and for six out of nine scenarios in 2050 results. One unfortunate caveat is the fact that the downscaled CMIP6 projection provided a relatively poor match to historic data in the Potomac basin. But our region is fortunate to have the ongoing feasibility study, which will identify "no regrets" alternatives to mitigate against both future extreme drought and future contaminant spill events.

C. Update on USACE Feasibility Study

Mr. Nardolilli reported on the status of the Feasibility Study. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) feasibility study decision-makers were briefed on the current progress at the Alternative Milestones Meeting on June 12 and they agreed to continue the study. CO-OP has provided requested data from the 2025 water supply study to USACE staff. The original 3 year-\$3 million agreement has been revised to 5.5 years-\$7.5-\$8.5 million agreement. Mr. Nardolilli was mindful that we are on borrowed time (even with increased precipitation in recent weeks) and that the prospects of increasingly severe droughts should motivate stakeholders to push for the secondary water source. Mr. Nardolilli presented the study schedule provided by USACE that ends with the Chief's report in February 2030. Conversion of Travilah Quarry to a reservoir would be a very effective step but would not be sufficient as a secondary source to meet the Capital Region's water supply needs, so new options are still under consideration, such as a desalinization plant, tunnels from Little Seneca Reservoir to WSSC and DC Aqueduct water treatment plants and water reuse.

Regarding funding for the study, \$500,000 was appropriated to USACE previously and Mr. Nardolilli shared that Congresswoman Norton has requested \$2.5 million to the House Committee on Appropriations under Community Project Funding. Chair Sussman shared that the doubling of the cost and timeline of the study concerns him regarding how much time we have to secure the secondary source. He asked if the narrowing of options under consideration was due to the time constraints or due to the projections. Mr. Nardolilli shared that the narrowing of options will increase the speed of the process as well as lower the cost of the study. Chair Sussman asked if the current options will be further narrowed and if there is potential for the cost to decrease further. He also shared that some of the options seem unrealistic in the current scope. Dr. Schultz said that USACE confirmed that the list of options is not fixed. Commissioner Guise shared that USACE's six outlined options add up to the roughly \$8 million estimate including planning and initial design work. USACE does not scope the project until after the

original 3 year-\$3 million cost share agreement. She emphasized the complexity of the project because of its regional scope, in contrast to a project that only addressed the needs of Washington Aqueduct. If the options can be further screened down, the cost will decrease. The sooner the refinement the better, Commissioner Guise noted.

D. Financial Statement

Dr. Schultz directed the group to Tab 3 Attachment 4. She shared that CO-OP is slightly over budget but hoped that it will round out by the end of the fiscal year.

6. New Business

A. Selection of Nominating Committee for FY2026 CO-OP Section Officers

Chair Sussman asked if any of the volunteers were willing to join the nominating committee.

Commissioner Potter said that she was happy to join in addition to Commissioner McCabe and Commissioner Madden. With three volunteers, **Chair Sussman asked for a motion to approve the selections. Commissioner Karimi made a motion as such, and Commissioner Madden seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the CO-OP Section designated the Nominating Committee.**

7. Adjourn

Chair Sussman commended Dr. Schultz's hard work on the 2025 Water Supply Study. He noted the heavy lift of the project and marveled at the scientific and technical expertise of all who contributed. **Chair Sussman then asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Karimi made a motion as such, and Commissioner Potter seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 9:25am.**

These minutes were written by Ms. Lily Bedwell and Dr. Cherie Schultz, then revised and approved of by Dr. Cherie Schultz and Mr. Michael Nardolilli.