Item 1 - Introductions

- Annette Caraway, Operator Certification Program Manager acted as moderator for this meeting. Meeting was held via Video/Teleconference and in person at the CalEPA building. Moderator noted there will not be a quorum of the Drinking Water Operator Certification Program (DWOCP) Advisory Committee at this meeting due to vacancies on the Committee. No action will be taken by the Committee.

Item 2 - Agenda Review

- Agenda items 3, 11, and 12 are related thus it was agreed that Agenda Items 11 (Role of the Stakeholders Advisory Committee) and 12 (State Water Board/DWOCP Relationship with Advisory Committee) be moved for discussion after Item 3 (Public Comments) at Joe Karkoski’s request.

Item 3 - Public Comments
Sue Mosburg from the California-Nevada Section American Water Works Association (CA-NV AWWA) was asked to give a brief summary of the State Water Board meeting agenda item presented on Tuesday May 10, 2022.

The Water Associations, CA-NV AWWA and Clean Water Environment Association (CWEA), in collaboration with the State Water Board, were able to present their powerpoint and whitepaper memo to the Board. Discussing three main DWOCP concerns 1) processing times and the impacts it has on the industry. 2) The relationship between the industry and the Operator Certification (OpCert) Program with a focus to refresh the program as industry changes and focused in on the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee relationship to be improved as partnership and collaboration to move program forward. 3) Regulations and guidelines and interpretation in reviewing the applications has become complex and would like these items to be updated/addressed. Hopes that Drinking Water, Wastewater, Advanced Water Treatment operator certifications, and One Water industry come together. Clearer regulations and experience requirements for reciprocity state to state, as well as, AB1588 which has not been acted on yet. Offered suggestions for improvement and provided an implementation timeline. Legislative changes will take a longer. The Board asked questions and were engaged. Not the same industry when regulations were implemented 20 plus years ago.

Joe Karkoski (State Water Board-Division of Financial Assistance) stated that the Board will be keeping track of how we are doing. Did ask to for a report back.

- ACTION ITEM: 4-6 month timeline. The Advisory Committee’s expectation of the OpCert, water industry, State Water Board, CA-NV AWWA, and CWEA is to develop and implement a plan.

Annette Caraway was not present at Board Meeting on 5/10/2022.

Move to other meeting room due to sound issues. 5 minute break.

DWOCP to send CA-NV AWWA and CWEA powerpoint and whitepaper to attendees. Sent May 11, 2022.

Larry Lyford (Helix Water District Water Treatment Plant Manager/former DWOCP Advisory Committee Member) thanked staff for really listening at last meeting. Appreciate all the efforts and thanked Annette Caraway for coming...
Item 11- Role of the Stakeholders Advisory Committee- Tai Tseng - Long Beach Water Department/ DWOCP Advisory Committee Member

Item 12 State Water Board/DWOCP Relationship with Advisory Committee

- Julie Osborn (State Water Board – Office of Chief Counsel) was asked to define role of Advisory Committee. State Water Board defines the role of Advisory Committee to particularly advise on regulations. Regulations go through Advisory Committee prior of submittal of changes going to public notice. The Committee can advise on anything in the program. The State Water Board listens to the Advisory Committee on all matters, recommendations, and guidance. All programs have stakeholders that they may reach out to but not all programs have an official advisory committee appointed by the State Water Board.

- Tai Tseng (Long Beach Water Department/DWOCP Advisory Committee Member) put this item on agenda to discuss the pain points noted at State Water Board meeting on March 10, 2022. Advisory Committee trying to move organization collectively forward. Offered that instead of taking legislative measures, The Advisory Committee could work within DWOCP to move the program forward. Provided the example of the recycled water which does not fall under Treatment, Distribution, or Wastewater certification. Challenging to put operators in these advance water facilities because the operators do not get experience towards higher level certifications.

- Larry Lyford not clear on the roles of the Advisory Committee which could have counted towards past frustrations. If Advisory Committee is supposed to be consulted prior to all regulations going out, there was public comment on Backflow pamphlet that never came to committee prior to regulation change. Annette Caraway clarified that backflow is handled by Division of Drinking Water (DDW) not DWOCP.

- Discussion was brought up regarding regulation change timelines. Annette Caraway responding that it depends on subject matter. Joe Karkoski moved conversation to discussion of public comment and solicited if there were any more.

- Sue Mosburg asked if there was any documentation that the State could provide on the role/function of an Advisory Committee specifically the function and role of this one? Joe responded that his impression that the Advisory Committee provided a floor as to what should be discussed. And collectively we can define the ceiling, the breadth and depth is up to us. Julie Osborn (State Water Board – Office of Chief Counsel was asked to clarify the Advisory Committee role and if public comment was allowed throughout meeting. Legal counsel responded yes;
the statute is very broad. The only set requirements is that it must follow open meeting requirements.

- Tai Tseng discussed the frustration the operators are experiencing with the time it takes to get an exam date. And offered the Advisory Committee’s help to assist in mitigation of the barriers. Asked for suggestions on how they can help.

- Ramzi Mahmood (Sacramento State Office of Water Programs Director/DWOCP Advisory Committee Member) provided knowledge of Advisory Committees at the University level. Frustration at first but with time and education, and an understanding where both sides come from, they have been very successful with their Advisory Committee. Goal being to seek to identify issues areas and move forward.

- Michael Maestas (Cucamonga Valley Water District Water Production Manager/DWOCP Advisory Committee Member) noted appreciation for the opportunity to have the conversation. Further, water industry has changed, and we need to adjust accordingly to maintain supply and quality.

- Jose Martinez (Otay Water District General Manager/DWOCP Advisory Committee Member) in agreement. Looks forward to moving forward. Wants to bring diverse knowledge and experience to the group and try to find a solution to these complex problems. Joe Karkoski and Sue Mosburg explain that there is a lot of energy around not only the conversation with the Board Members but the industry in general and the want to engage. He wants to focus on efficiency, focus on how the State Water Board process with the regulatory/statutory barriers and partner in workforce development.

  - ACTION:
    - Joe Karkoski and Sue Mosburg: Create structure with CWEA and CA-NV AWWA to create action plan with timelines. Identify with issues need to be addressed, then form subgroups/workgroups in between meetings to address then report back out to the Advisory Committee. These subgroups to include regulatory reform, job task analysis, reciprocity between other states, military experience etc. Sue Mosburg to work through the details. Joe Karkoski asks that a few Advisory Committee members to volunteer to work as chairs/co-chairs to work with Sue Mosburg and the DWOCP team in starting to identify the workgroups. Mike Maestas and Jose Martinez volunteer.

    - Larry Lyford asks to have a commitment from the DWOCP staff to fill in all nominations. Joe Karkoski agreed to commitment. Within another week these vacancies will be filled. Annette explains that DWOCP will still have one vacancy after the current nominations are approved. No one has come forward to participate from a Local Primacy Agency.
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(LPA). The vacancy does not affect quorum. Joe Karkoski, Josh Ziese, and Annette Caraway will work with DDW to identify someone. Everyone agrees that the relationship between Advisory Committee, the industry, and DWOCP as well as the role of Advisory Committee has been identified. One of these barriers is that Advisory Committee only meets twice a year. Suggestion to meet more frequently is brought up.

Item 4 – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Update- Adam Ramos - USEPA

No updated provided. Adam Ramos not in attendance.

Item 5 - Enforcement Update – German Myers - State Water Board - Office of Enforcement

- To date 227 total cases, 75 are drinking water related. Of the 75 cases, there are 8 open investigations, 5 involving Drinking Water, 3 from current fiscal year. Since last November, opened 4 cases, 3 of those were operator misconduct and one being exam misconduct. Closed 17 cases due to operator misconduct, experience issues, expired certificate levels. 8 of those resulted in enforcement action. 1 revocation. 2 referred to DWOCP, 2 referred to DDW due to reporting issues/ reclassification of system.

Item 6 - Recycled/Advance Water Treatment Update - Steven Garner - CA-NV AWWA

- Current Advanced Water Treatment Certifications
  - 108 operator grade 3
  - 29 operator grade 4
  - 13 operator grade 5
  - 108 is total count, those that have 4 and 5 also hold a 3.

- Program self-sufficient in funding. Exams are covering the expenses. Contributions from stakeholders are going to marketing and refresh of exams and certification committee.

- Question: Joe Karkoski asked the question: Are systems that are hiring asking for advanced water treatment certifications? Tai Tseng responded: Long Beach Water does not require it but encourages it. John Carrol responded: San Diego has made it a requirement for their pure water projects/operations.

Item 7 - Regulatory Update – Randy Barnard-State Water Board- Division of Drinking Water (DDW)

- 3 major regulations being worked on
  - Recycled, direct potable reuse, and advanced water treatment
  - Cross connection control handbook expected by the end of the year
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- Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) has not changed but science was reassessed on how to determine the MCL. Hexavalent Chromium out for comment.


- Larry Lyford asked if the Consumer Confidence Reports (CCR), reported twice a year, is the same data repeated or should it be new data?
  - ACTION: Randy Barnard to address issues presented and get back to the Advisory Committee.

Item 8 - Water Distribution Exam Validation - Jon Strutzel – State Water Board - DWOCP
No update provided. Jon Strutzel not in attendance.

Item 9 - Program/Exam Update – Alessandra Langen – State Water Board - DWOCP

- Introduction to new DWOCP program manager
- Jon Strutzel (June 1, 2022) and Amy Chiang (July 1, 2022) are retiring June 1, 2022, and July 1, 2022 respectively.
  - ACTION: Christopher Stevens identified Jody Hack to fill Jon Struzel's position temporarily. Grade 5 Treatment examination dates are tentatively scheduled for mid-July 2022
- Alice Webber back as Retired Annuitant
  - ACTION: Hiring two analysts and five seasonal clerks.
- Discussion of electronic application possibility. Joe Karkoski said it is in the very early stages, working on scope of work. Looking to have this for both Drinking Water (DW) and Wastewater (WW). Beta testing and working with Advisory Committee to get feedback
  - ACTION: Continue progress on OpCert portal
- Tai Tseng addressed concerns in operators obtaining a certificate. The delay of process times causing anxiety as well as employment status being affected (no promotions, probation, some do not get paid until they have a certificate in hand). Would like to have a dashboard or somewhere they can check on status. Steve Garner suggested more communication with supervisors on what exactly needs to be submitted. Communicate with the newsletters again. Make sure the supervisors are educated on this material. Mike Maestas suggested a YouTube video of what a complete application looks like, website is cumbersome and hard to navigate. Joe Karkoski agrees need to think through different methods of
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communication. Joshua Ziese suggested taping into other resources in the division to help with that type of marketing. Issue: Operators have trouble preparing packages.

- ACTION: Identify ways to reach/educate Operators on submittals. Newsletters? Videos? Sue Mosburg requested to add tips about DWOCP in AWWA newsletters. Submitting a complete certification application will be posted to the DWOCP website.

- Alice Webber (State Water Board – OOC) noted that our volume is increasing as people can continually take their exams whenever they want due to Computer Based Testing (CBT) whereas before it was only twice a year it was available to them. There is no delay in when they can take the exam. Annette Caraway states volume was already high and it’s getting higher. Operators waiting until the end of the 4-month window to schedule their exams. Alice Webber explains that if the operators have not heard from us then they need to contact us.

- Dan DeMoss (California Rural Water Association Executive Director/DWOCP Advisory Committee Member), CBT has made it more difficult to schedule and the certification review courses on their end, but they have had 800-1,200 applicants go through for certification prep.

- Conrad Tona (City of Redding Public Works Supervisor) offered his assistance in helping the operators/applicants. Offered his services of YouTube videos, funding for training etc. More than willing to assist where needed.

- It was confirmed by Julie Osborn as by determination of her supervisor, that in order to have proper quorum, it is required that the Advisory Committee members meeting attendance is to be in-person.

**Item 10 - Status Update Implementing AB1588- Jose Martinez – Otay Water District/DWOCP Advisory Committee Member**

- Need to develop criteria for military reciprocity. This needs to be a workgroup. Jon Strutzel was to do so; Christopher Stevens is aware and need to make sure to bring the person replacing Jon Strutzel into the workgroup.

**Item 13 - Schedule next meeting**

- November 16, 2022 was given but Sue Mosburg and Sue Murphy suggested that previously these meetings were held around the same time the CA-NV AWWA conference is in October. Often the meetings would overlap.

- Next meeting: October 27, 2022, 9:00-11:00am
  - ACTION: Placeholder to be sent out. Placeholder sent 6/3/2022