Office of Operator Certification (OOC)
Wastewater Operator Certification Program (WWOCP) Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes – October 8, 2026

Meeting Date: **Thursday, October 8, 2026**

Attendees: **Advisory Committee Members**

Sejal Patel, Akram Botrous, Nick Depierola, Josh Vieira, Scott Lening

State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board)

Keisha Kelley, Valerie Gregory, Jon Hermison, Helen Wuellner, Antonio Aguilar, Sarah Miller, German Myers, Erin Garner, Andrew Cline, Desiree Hatton

Public

Angeles Caliso, Susan O'Gorman, Thomas Olajuwon, Amanda Simpson, Beth Ochasso, Sue Mosburg

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Item 1 – Introductions

- Keisha Kelley, OOC Program Manager, acted as moderator for this meeting. The meeting was held via Video/Teleconference and in person at the California Environmental Protection Agency building located at 1001 I Street, Sacramento, California 95814.

Item 2 – Agenda Review

- Keisha Kelley reviewed the agenda and proceeded as scheduled with a reminder that the meeting is being recorded for note taking purposes only and will be deleted after meeting minutes are prepared.

Item 3 – Public Comments

- Susan O'Gorman, Willow Creek Community Services District, addressed the advisory committee regarding two topics: 1) operator certification experience requirements for Professional Engineers, and 2) the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) classification criteria.

Item 4 – Office of Enforcement (OE) Update

- German Myers provided an OE update for April 2026 to present. (Attachment A)
    - 5 open cases currently
    - 17 cases closed that resulted in:
        - 10 resolved with action;

        - 6 resolved without action; and
        - 1 insufficient evidence.
    - Actions taken:
        - 10 Notice of Violations issued.

Item 5 – Program Updates

- Advisory Committee Vacancies
    - There are three vacant advisory committee positions remaining.
    - Nominations have been solicited through an email subscription list notification email and by listing the solicitation on the WWOCP website. Only one nomination was received and is currently under review. Current open positions are:
        - 1 vacancy for - A person from a statewide organization representing local sanitation agencies other than municipalities including counties or private utility WWTPs.
        - 1 vacancy for - A person from a statewide organization representing WWTP operators and supervisors. Must be employed at a WWTP as an operator or supervisor.
        - 1 vacancy for - A member of an organized labor union which represents WWTP operators.
    - Once the nomination is reviewed and approved or not approved, the WWOCP will re-solicit for additional nominations to fill remaining vacant positions through an email subscription list notification email and by listing the solicitation on the WWOCP website.

- Staffing Update
    - The OOC program currently has one vacant clerical position in Unit 1.
    - This position is generally responsible for the following tasks:
        - Monitors general email boxes;
            - Forwards inquiries internally as appropriate;
            - Responds to less complex inquiries;
        - Processes payments;
        - Provides clerical support for the processing of drinking water exam applications;
        - Processes operators change of contact information requests;
        - Lead on assisting operators with Operator Certification Information System/WBKey accounts.
    - This position became vacant on July 1, 2026, OOC has initiated the recruitment process and expects to have the vacancy filled by November or December of this calendar year.
    - Processing times have remained consistently within the required regulatory 30-day time frame.

- Program statistics (Attachment B)
    - Comparison of applications received, and the number of certifications issued for the same 6-month period in 2025 and 2026.
    - Online application totals for January through June 2026, along with cumulative online application figures.
    - The current number of classified WWTPs, by grade. There are 1,101 classified WWTPs, with Grades 1 and 3 comprising the majority.
    - Certifications – number of valid certificates by grade for each month from January through June 2026.
    - Examinations –
        - Pass/Fail statistics for the same 6-month period in 2025 and 2026.
            - Small fluctuations in the pass percentages are normal.
        - Cumulative pass/fail statistics.
            - Cumulative pass percentages have remained consistent with little to no fluctuation from the percentages reported this past spring.
        - Exam Pass Rates - Other States
            - Exam pass-rate statistics from other states were compiled for comparison at the WWOCP advisory committee's request. Responses were received from New York, Colorado, Arizona, and Oregon.
            - All four states use WPI exams, formerly known as ABC exams.
            - Unlike California, New York, Colorado, Arizona, and Oregon do not offer five certification levels.
- Online application portal
    - The OOC, in coordination with the State Water Board's Division of Information Technology, has continued development of an interactive online application portal to allow applicants the ability to submit applications electronically, review and resolve application deficiencies online, and track application statuses.
    - Since February 2025, applicants have been able to submit examination applications for all disciplines and grade levels electronically through the portal.
    - Since July 2025, operators have been able to submit wastewater renewal applications for all grade levels electronically through the portal.
    - Since February 2026, operators have been able to submit drinking water renewal applications for both disciplines and all grade levels electronically through the portal.
    - Currently, the OOC is working with the State Water Boards Division of Information Technology on the development of electronic certification applications.

- Customer service survey (Attachment C)
    - The semi-annual customer service survey results were provided to advisory committee members and stakeholders via email in September of this calendar year.
    - The survey results cover the six-month period of March 2026 through August 2026.
    - There were 8 respondents total for this survey period, and the weighted average for overall experience with the OOC was 3.3 out of 5.
    - Respondents are not required to provide a response to every question; they may skip questions and are given the opportunity to provide additional comments or suggestions to improve the program and leave their contact information. Respondents that leave contact information are contacted by OOC staff to address and resolve any issues, if applicable.
    - Survey results covering the six-month period of September 2026 – February 2027 will be provided to advisory committee members and stakeholders via email in March 2027.

Item 6 – Progress on Regulatory Revisions

- Over this past year OOC staff have made a considerable amount of progress on completing regulatory updates for both Programs.
- Fall 2025 OOC completed scoping of high-level regulatory updates for the WWOCP and at advisory committee meetings held on October 20, 2025, and November 24, 2025, the WWOCP advisory committee reviewed and provided feedback on the proposed updates.
- Currently the WWOCP's rulemaking package is in the drafting phase. OOC staff are meeting weekly to draft the regulatory amendments, taking the advisory committees feedback into consideration, and tentatively project going to public notice early 2027. From there it can take up to a year to complete the rulemaking process.

Item 7 – Next Advisory Committee Meeting

- The OOC will reach out via email no later than December or January to begin scheduling the next meeting for the Spring.

Action Items

- The OOC to provide new advisory committee members with the most recent exam score summary reports from a previous advisory committee meeting.
- The OOC to provide new advisory committee members with the most recent aging reports from a previous advisory committee meeting.

- The OOC to research and determine if a Professional Engineers license qualifies individuals for certification in other states (New York, Colorado, Arizona, and Oregon) and determine what is the highest grade level they may qualify for with only a Professional Engineers license. Findings to be provided at the spring meeting.
- The OOC to research and determine if other states (New York, Colorado, Arizona, and Oregon have supervision requirements, comparable to California's OIT requirement. Findings to be provided at the spring meeting.

Attachment A

Wastewater (WW) Cases/Enforcement Metrics

Wastewater (WW) Case/Enforcement Metrics

Case Type	No. of Cases Closed (Total)	No. of Cases Opened (04/28/26 – 10/08/26)	Current No. of Open Cases	No. of Cases Closed (04/28/26 – 10/08/26)
CPO Misconduct	20	0	0	0
Operator Misconduct	65	1	2	2
Exam Misconduct	6	0	0	0
F/F – Reporting/Lab	12	0	0	0
F/F – Experience Hours/Duties	18	0	0	0
Failure to Maintain a CPO	67	3	2	5
Expired or Insufficient Certificate Level	45	3	0	9
Other	14	2	1	1
Total	**247**	**9**	**5**	**17**

Wastewater (WW) Case/Enforcement Metrics

Case Closure	No. of Cases Closed (Total)	No. of Cases Opened (04/28/26 – 10/08/26)
Resolved with Action	83	10
Resolved without Action	134	6
Insufficient Evidence	30	1
Total	**247**	**17**

Wastewater (WW) Case/Enforcement Metrics

Actions Taken	No. of Actions (Total)	No. of Actions (04/28/26 – 10/08/26)
Reprimand	20	0
Suspension	4	0
Grade Lowered	1	0
Revoked License	2	0
Voluntary Compliance	0	0
Refer to OOC	4	0
Refer to Regional Board	4	0
Refer to DDW	0	0
Staff Enforcement Letter (SEL)	7	0
Notice of Violation (NOV)	55	10
Other	2	0
Total	**99**	**10**

Wastewater Operator Certification Program
October 8, 2026, Advisory Committee Meeting

Statistics

WASTEWATER		
	2025 1/1/2025-6/30/2025	**2026 1/1/2026-6/30/2026**
Applications received (exam, cert, renewals)	1,770	3,155
Certificates issued (new and renewals)	956	1,189

ONLINE EXAMINATION APPLICATIONS RECEIVED Reporting period: 1/1/2026 – 6/30/2026	
Grade	Total Online Apps
WW Grade 1	125
WW Grade 2	145
WW Grade 3	114
WW Grade 4	29
WW Grade 5	52
Total	**465**

ONLINE RENEWAL APPLICATIONS RECEIVED Reporting period: 1/1/2026 – 6/30/2026	
Grade	Total Online Apps
WW Grade 1-5	321

CUMULATIVE ONLINE EXAMINATION APPLICATIONS RECEIVED Reporting period: Inception – 6/30/2026		
Inception	Grade	Total Online Apps
9/2023	WW Grade 1	762
9/2023	WW Grade 2	810
10/2024	WW Grade 3	378
1/2025	WW Grade 4	82
7/2025	WW Grade 5	155
	Total	**2,187**

CUMULATIVE ONLINE RENEWAL APPLICATIONS RECEIVED Reporting period: 7/12/2025 (Inception) – 6/30/2026	
Grade	Total Online Apps
WW Grade 1-5	437

CLASSIFIED WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANTS	
Classification	Number of WWTPs
1	262
2	181
3	439
4	144
5	75
Total	**1,101**

NUMBER OF VALID CERTIFICATES						
Grade	Jan 2026	Feb 2026	Mar 2026	Apr 2026	May 2026	June 2026
OIT	723	721	719	720	708	699
1	780	785	791	795	805	801
2	1,534	1,538	1,543	1,554	1,566	1,573
3	1,885	1,883	1,886	1,888	1,890	1,899
4	429	430	431	430	432	431
5	1,127	1,130	1,133	1,138	1,143	1,146
Total	**6,478**	**6,487**	**6,503**	**6,525**	**6,544**	**6,549**

COMPUTER-BASED TESTING PASS/FAIL Reporting Period 1/1/2025- 6/30/2025				
Grade	Examinees	Pass Count	Fail Count	Pass Percent
WW Grade 1	203	110	93	54%
WW Grade 2	201	96	105	48%
WW Grade 3	182	69	113	38%
WW Grade 4	39	6	33	15%
WW Grade 5	87	25	62	29%

COMPUTER-BASED TESTING PASS/FAIL Reporting Period 1/1/2026 - 6/30/2026				
Grade	Examinees	Pass Count	Fail Count	Pass Percent
WW Grade 1	176	101	75	57%
WW Grade 2	201	91	110	45%
WW Grade 3	170	72	98	42%
WW Grade 4	39	11	28	28%
WW Grade 5	98	34	64	35%

CUMULATIVE COMPUTER-BASED TESTING PASS/FAIL Reporting Period: 2/20/2021 (CBT Inception) – 6/30/2026				
Grade	Examinees	Pass Count	Fail Count	Pass Percent
WW Grade 1	1,989	1,097	892	55%
WW Grade 2	2,081	1,121	960	54%
WW Grade 3	1,892	702	1,190	37%
WW Grade 4	518	145	373	28%
WW Grade 5	945	276	669	29%

Comparison of Exam Pass Rates With Other States

State Timeframe	California 7/1/25-6/30/26	New York* 1/1/25-12/31/25	Colorado* 1/1/26-6/30/26	Arizona* 7/1/25-6/30/26	Oregon* 5/1/25-4/30/26
		*Uses WPI (formerly known as ABC) for exams. Stats were provided by each state.			
Grade	I	1 and 1A	Class D	1	I
Examinees	370	21	309	421	97
Pass	221	12	142	339	94
Fail	149	9	167	82	3
Pass Percent	60%	57%	46%	81%	97%
Grade	II	2 and 2A	Class C	2	II
Examinees	420	85	151	276	58
Pass	214	53	82	210	50
Fail	206	22	69	66	8
Pass Percent	51%	62%	54%	76%	86%
Grade	III	3 and 3A	Class B	3	III
Examinees	368	67	186	138	28
Pass	151	48	59	104	25
Fail	217	19	127	34	3
Pass Percent	41%	72%	32%	75%	89%
Grade	IV	4 and 4A	Class A	4	IV
Examinees	91	27	138	107	20
Pass	28	21	43	92	19
Fail	63	6	95	15	1
Pass Percent	31%	78%	31%	86%	95%
Grade	V	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Examinees	209	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pass	66	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fail	143	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pass Percent	32%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Office of Operator Certification Customer Service Survey - Results
March 1, 2026 to August 31, 2026

8 respondents

Questions

Are you a certified operator?	**yes**	6	75%				
	no	2	25%				
							Number of Respondents
Ratings: 1 (low) to 5 (high)	**weighted avg: 3.3**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
Rate your overall experience with the Office of Operator Certification		38%	0%	0%	13%	**50%**	**8**
What was the purpose of your interaction (within the last 24 months) with the Office of Operator Certification?	Examination	13%					**8**
	Certification	**75%**					
	Renewal	13%					
	Program Information	0%					
	Other (please specify)	0%					
Did you feel our team answered you promptly?	yes	50%					**8**
	no	50%					
How likely are you to recommend our program?	**very likely**	**50%**					**8**
	likely	0%					
	neither likely nor unlikely	13%					
	unlikely	0%					
	very unlikely	38%					
How satisfied are you with our programs / services?	**very satisfied**	**50%**					**8**
	satisfied	0%					
	neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	13%					
	dissatisfied	0%					
	very dissatisfied	38%					
How easy did the Office of Operator Certification make it for you to solve your issue?	easy	38%					**8**
	somewhat easy	13%					
	neither easy nor difficult	0%					
	somewhat difficult	0%					
	difficult	**50%**					

Date	Please share your experience / Any additional comments you would like to provide or suggestions that could help improve our program?		Would you like to share your name and contact information?			issue category
	Open-Ended Response		Name	Email Address	Phone	
6/12/2026	The organization never reaches back out. Since 2020 things have not changed. COVID can not still be an excuse.					
6/29/2026	I was having issues understanding the process and the next steps. I reached out and was greeted by Mercedes Jones. She make it very clear and step by step with the process. She is absolutely amazing. Went above and beyond to help. Thank you so much.	No she was amazing.	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
6/16/2026	No					
4/30/2026	I called and left emails and never got a reply for my oit certification					
4/2/2026	I have contacted the office for the renewal of my contract operator certification twice, through email and phone calls each time. and received an email from maybe, Barbara, saying she was going to pull my file. This was two to three weeks ago without any contact. Please call me so we can figure out what is happening. [redacted]	A phone with a human answering it.	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	