

**Office of Operator Certification (OOC)
Wastewater Operator Certification Program (WWOCP) Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes – April 28, 2026**

Meeting Date: Tuesday, April 28, 2026

Attendees: Advisory Committee Members

Scott Lening, Steve Krai, Josh Vieira, Tracy Crane, Louis Sun, Akram Botrous, Ben Carver

State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board)

Joshua Ziese, Helen Wuellner, Keisha Kelley, Julie Osborn, Valerie Gregory, Jon Hermison, Antonio Aguilar, Sarah Miller, German Myers, Michael Jones, Sahand Rastegarpour

Public

Ian Tillery, Deler Ghazi

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

- There were no public comments.

Item 4 – Office of Enforcement (OE) Update

- German Myers provided an OE update for November 2025 to present:
 - 13 open cases currently, including 7 new cases.
 - The 7 new cases include:
 - 2 cases of operator misconduct;
 - 2 cases regarding no chief plant operators (CPO);
 - 1 case regarding an Operator-in-Training without certification; and
 - 2 cases regarding operation and maintenance at facilities.

**Office of Operator Certification (OOC)
Wastewater Operator Certification Program (WWOCP) Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes – April 28, 2026**

- 15 cases closed that resulted in:
 - 3 reprimands;
 - 3 notices of violation; and
 - 1 staff enforcement letter
- 9 pending actions:
 - Notice of Violations were sent out for failure to maintain a CPO

Item 5 – Program Updates

- Advisory Committee Vacancies
 - There are seven advisory committee positions with terms ending on June 30th and one additional position that became vacant in the month of April.
 - Nominations have been solicited through an email subscription list notification email and by listing the solicitation on the WWOCP website. Only three nominations were received. A second solicitation has been sent out for:
 - 1 vacancy for - A person from a statewide organization representing local sanitation agencies other than municipalities including counties or private utility wastewater treatment plants.
 - 2 vacancies for - A person from a statewide organization representing wastewater treatment plant operators and supervisors. Must be employed at a wastewater treatment plant as an operator or supervisor.
 - 1 vacancy for - A member of an organized labor union which represents wastewater treatment plant operators.
 - 1 vacancy for - A person from a university or state university school or division of engineering.
 - Nominations for the second solicitation are due by 4pm on May 26.
- Staffing Update
 - The OOC has remained fully staffed.
 - Processing times have remained consistently within the required regulatory 30-day time frame.
- Program Statistics (Attachment A)
 - Comparison of applications received, and the number of certifications issued for the same 6-month period in 2024 and 2025.
 - Certifications – number of valid certificates by grade for each month from July – December 2025.
 - Examinations –
 - pass/fail statistics for the same 6-month period in 2024 and 2025.

**Office of Operator Certification (OOC)
Wastewater Operator Certification Program (WWOCP) Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes – April 28, 2026**

- Small fluctuations in the pass percentages are normal, however the pass rates for all grades increased for the 2025 reporting period.
 - Cumulative computer-based testing pass/fail statistics.
 - Cumulative pass percentages have remained consistent with little to no fluctuation from the percentages reported this past fall.
- 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.
 - As of February 2025, examination applications for all disciplines and grade levels can be submitted electronically through the Operator Certification Information System (OCIS) portal.
 - As of July 2025, wastewater renewal applications for all grades can be submitted electronically through the OCIS portal.
 - As of February 2026, drinking water renewal applications for all grades can be submitted electronically through the OCIS 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
 - The semi-annual customer service survey results were provided to advisory committee members and stakeholders via email in March of this calendar year.
 - The survey results cover the 6-month period of September 2025 through February 2026.
 - There were 14 respondents total for this survey period and the weighted average for overall experience with the OOC program was 3.5 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 6-month period of March 2026 through August 2026 will be provided to advisory committee members and stakeholders via email in September 2026.
- Progress on Regulatory Revisions
 - Over this past year OOC staff have made a considerable amount of progress on completing regulatory updates for both Programs.

**Office of Operator Certification (OOC)
Wastewater Operator Certification Program (WWOCP) Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes – April 28, 2026**

- In the fall OOC completed scoping of high-level regulatory updates for the WWOCP and at Advisory Committee Meetings held on October 20 and November 24, 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 in early 2027. From there it can take up to a year to complete the rulemaking process.
- Fee Changes
 - Authority, guiding principles, and process
 - Pursuant to subdivision (e) of Water Code section 13628, the State Water Board is required to review its fees each fiscal year to ensure that the fees collected provide sufficient revenue to recover the costs of the WWOCP and to compensate for past over-collection or under-collection of revenue. Subdivision (e) of Water Code section 13628 also authorizes the State Water Board to adopt amendments to the WWOCP fees through the emergency rulemaking process. The emergency regulations remain in effect until they are revised by the State Water Board.
 - The OOC reviews the programs fund to ensure that:
 - The fees generate sufficient revenue to cover program expenditures; and
 - Works within legislative budgetary authority.
 - The fee setting process consists of:
 - An annual review of Program expenditures and revenues including actuals for prior years as well as estimates for current year and projections for future years;
 - Determining if the fee schedule needs adjustments;
 - Conducting an Advisory Committee meeting to discuss adjustments and proposed changes to the fee schedule;
 - Taking the fee schedule proposed changes to the Board for approval; and
 - Implementing the approved fee schedule changes via the emergency rulemaking process.
 - Background
 - The WWOCP's revenue comes from fees paid by applicants, certified operators, and registered contract operators for various services associated with certification. There are approximately 6,000 certified wastewater treatment plant operators. The operational expenses for WWOCP fall into three broad areas: 1)

**Office of Operator Certification (OOC)
Wastewater Operator Certification Program (WWOCP) Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes – April 28, 2026**

issuing and renewing certificates and registrations; 2) administering operator examinations; and 3) enforcement against operators, contract operators, and wastewater treatment plant owners that have violated the WWOCP Regulations. More specifically, the WWOCP's responsibilities include:

- Processing certification applications;
 - Processing renewals for approximately 6,000 operators once every 3 years;
 - Classifying wastewater treatment plants;
 - Processing examination applications;
 - Administering examinations through CBT;
 - Registering and renewing approximately 75 contract operator registrations;
 - Maintaining physical files, the Operator Certification database (OCIS), and the WWOCP website;
 - Conducting outreach and customer education, as necessary;
 - Investigating complaints of misconduct and conduct appropriate enforcement actions;
 - Amending the WWOCP Regulations, as necessary; and
 - Coordinating with the WWOCP Advisory Committee.
- Program revenue and expenditures
- Effective November 16, 2017, the WWOCP fees were reduced with the goal of lowering the fund reserve to a prudent reserve of \$1 million over six years.
 - Since 2017 the costs to administer the WWOCP have consistently outpaced the revenue that the WWOCP collects. Although the level of effort to administer the WWOCP has remained relatively steady and no additional staff are anticipated for future WWOCP operations, the associated operating costs have risen significantly since the WWOCP fees were reduced. Increases in staff salaries are the primary factor driving the increases in operating costs.
 - Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and cancelations of the Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 examinations, the WWOCP experienced a reduction in examination and certification applications and associated fees. Fewer operators applied for the Fall 2020 examination, and because of the canceled examinations there was a reduced number of operators that qualified for certification. The WWOCP therefore experienced an additional unanticipated reduction in revenue, which has decreased the WWOCP Fund reserves.
 - The OOC met with the WWOCP Advisory Committee to discuss fee adjustments to close the gap between expenditures and revenues and achieve a prudent fund reserve in the summer of 2024.

**Office of Operator Certification (OOC)
Wastewater Operator Certification Program (WWOCP) Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes – April 28, 2026**

- The Advisory Committee recommended three years of fee increases at equal rates.
- Taking that recommendation into consideration OOC projected 35 percent fee increases in FY 24-25, 25-26, and 26-27 to close the gap between expenditures and revenues and achieve a prudent fund reserve.
- The WWOCP fees increased by 35% in FY 24-25 and 25-26. Currently, the estimated revenue for FY 25-26 is projected to be just under \$1 million and expenditures are projected to be about \$1.3 million.
- These estimates indicate that a 35 percent fee increase effective FY 26-27 is necessary to close the remaining gap between expenditures and revenue.

Item 6 – Next Advisory Committee Meeting

- The OOC will reach out via email no later than July or August to begin scheduling the next meeting for the Fall.

Action Items

- The OOC to provide data on how many wastewater treatment plants are in each plant classification in future statistics.
- The OOC was asked to provide data on the number of electronic applications received through the OCIS online application portal.