

**Attachment 2A
MEETING SUMMARY
DIRECTORS OF UTILITIES COMMITTEE
June 14, 2012
Newport News**

1. Work Program Planning – Background Information

HRPDC staff reviewed the purpose of the work program planning meeting and provided handouts outlining discussion topics, the FY 2013 Water and Wastewater Program budgets, summary of year to date program funding and expenses, and a summary of program budgets from FY 1997 to FY2013.

Mr. John Carlock, HRPDC Deputy Director, provided a brief overview of the history of the water and wastewater programs, from the initial cooperative groundwater work with USGS in the 1980s, to the mid-1990s development of the groundwater mitigation program and HRWET, and program expansion in the 2000s to include priority projects such as addressing fats, oils, and grease and the requirements of the Special Order of Consent for SSOs.

ACTION: No action.

2. USGS Briefing - Cooperative Groundwater Level and Chloride Monitoring Program

Ms. Whitney Katchmark, HRPDC, introduced Mr. Mark Bennett, USGS, who summarized recent work under the HRPDC-USGS cooperative investigation of Coastal Plain groundwater resources and presented the following potential projects for consideration:

- Analysis of the existing chloride network to optimize monitoring network;
- Area of impact analyses for permitted municipal withdrawals; and
- Assessment of change in groundwater levels and storage based on projected withdrawals in the Regional Water Supply Plan.

Regarding the chloride monitoring program, it was noted that the vast majority of chloride data comes from the network funded by the HRPDC-USGS cooperative agreement. The current annual program cost is approximately \$47,000. Some wells exhibit significant increases in chloride concentrations, but due to various sampling intervals and the locations of monitoring stations it is difficult to confirm trends and patterns in the chloride data. Observed increases could be attributable to lateral intrusion of seawater, localized upconing associated with production wells, or a combination of both effects. Mr. Bennett described the difference in spatial coverage

between the existing ad hoc network and the ideal monitoring network, and suggested the following:

- Maintain the existing network for ambient monitoring;
- Assess the utility DEQ SWIM program data for spatial coverage and sampling frequency; and
- Assess user-specific coverage/frequency and design local sub-networks and recommended sampling protocols.

Regarding the potential project to assess the area of impact for municipal wells, Mr. Bennett noted that DEQ has decided to move forward with the new groundwater model but has yet to determine a timeframe for action. The decision was prompted by the recommendation of the panel formed to evaluate the agency's overall groundwater program. USGS provided technical information and reach-back expertise at all panel meetings. A report was prepared by the panel and provided to the Secretary of Natural Resources. To prepare for implementation of permit evaluations using the new model, DEQ's consultant, Aquaveo, is developing front-end tools to automate model runs. DEQ is moving away from the idea of running the model to steady state; in the interim, the agency intends to examine the area of impact. Although DEQ has expressed willingness to install monitoring wells, the agency could potentially utilize permits to require the installation of additional monitoring wells.

As there were no further questions for Mr. Bennett, USGS was excused from the meeting. During discussion, differing opinions were expressed by Committee members regarding the utility of the data and the value of the investigative work as it translates to practical applications. Comments made during the subsequent Committee discussion are summarized below:

- The HRPDC-USGS cooperative program has resulted in work products that indicate increased chlorides in groundwater, aquifer storage loss, and the potential for groundwater withdrawals to exacerbate subsidence. This information is valuable. The Committee could send correspondence to DEQ stating that funding for these programs will cease unless DEQ provides matching funds.
- A letter to DEQ could be poorly received. Would it be better to just stop funding the program?
- Any future HRPDC-USGS work should be done in consultation with DEQ's water program to assure the agency's buy-in and responsiveness to products/findings in terms of applying and utilizing new data and tools to improve regulatory and programmatic activities.
- Without concrete products that serve the customer base, it is difficult to support the current program and future studies, especially when state funding support is not being provided.

- Thus far, DEQ has ignored the implications of the data. If DEQ will not agree to using the data and products of the USGS cooperative program, why should the Committee keep funding the program? It appears that politics, rather than science, is driving regulatory decisions. Until DEQ actually begins applying the new model, it is difficult to feel assured of the value of the investment.
- Utilities have a responsibility to protect groundwater resources to avoid impacts to private wells. Carryover funds from past years could be used to fund monitoring and studies that address the shared needs of DEQ and groundwater permit holders. The Committee could approach DEQ to ask the state to characterize their needs, and then consider applying carryover funds to address mutual priorities in partnership with DEQ.
- The Committee could maintain funding for the chloride monitoring network, but hold off on funding other activities, keeping the carryover funds in reserve until priorities emerge.
- As far as work product benefits to the customer, it should be noted that study results imply future decreases in productivity due to storage loss, subsidence, and salt water intrusion. This information is important and the state should provide funding to support further monitoring and analyses. The Committee could present the state with a cost sharing proposal for the USGS cooperative program; the Committee would not provide funds unless the state also provides funds.
- The ongoing work under the HRPDC-USGS cooperative program has allowed DEQ to cut back agency programs and funding. Localities cannot keep filling in for state and federal agencies when they are subject to the same economic and budgetary pressures. The reason USGS developed programs with local partners was to address the gap caused by decreased federal funding.
- The Committee could provide a brief and statement to the Water Commission describing the total program investment and results to support a request for state assistance.

The Committee agreed to cease funding the USGS cooperative monitoring program at the end of FY12, as “localities are unable to continue funding the program.” Due to time constraints, the Committee did not reach consensus regarding the suggestions to contact the state to propose a partnership, cost sharing program, or request assistance in the future. The Committee agreed that the use of program carryover funds should be discussed at another meeting.

ACTION: The Committee agreed that funding will not be expended to support FY13 USGS cooperative monitoring programs (water level and chloride) and HRPDC staff will not execute a contract with USGS for FY13 activities.

3. Water Program

Ms. Julia Hillegass provided an overview of the water education programs and budget elements and a handout summarizing FY12 promotions for water awareness. It was clarified that HRWET, HRFOG, HRSTORM, and HRCLEAN funding is used to fund the umbrella program askHRgreen.org. The comments made during Committee discussion are summarized below:

- Newport News Waterworks would like HRWET program funds to be used to help educate the public on the value of water service. Water service is taken for granted because it is so reliable; there is a lack of understanding of how the water utility supports the expected standard of living as well as essential public health services, public safety/fire protection services, and commercial activities. Although the value of tap water and water conservation messages are good, the value of water service message is key. Waterworks wants to benefit from economies of scale on messaging, and the utility already expends significant in-house staff resources on the conservation message.
- Waterworks is concerned that many of the stormwater, water quality, and environmental messages publicized through askHRgreen.org do not align with Waterwork's mission. The askHRgreen.org campaign "checks the box" for water conservation education, but does not promote the public health, safety/fire protection, and economic benefits of water service. Waterworks also anticipates messaging will be needed to address customer concerns regarding chloramines.
- Waterworks is concerned that customers do not connect the askHRgreen.org campaign with Newport News Waterworks. Instead, customers attribute messages to HRPDC. Waterworks would like the campaign to help customers make the connection between Waterworks and program benefits, providing the utility with value from the askHRgreen.org branding effort.
- Virginia Beach strongly supports the water conservation message and water conservation ethic promoted through HRWET. Although the "use water wisely" message is still there, the City feels the conservation message should receive more emphasis. If the message were to be downplayed any more, Virginia Beach Public Utilities may have to divert funding support from HRWET toward a conservation education program promoted by the utility. Thus far, Virginia Beach has made a compromise on the level of promotion of the conservation message in support of the regional program; utilities cannot expect to meet all local education priorities through the regional program.
- The HRWET campaign has expanded and refocused messaging in response to direction from the committee regarding changing priorities. It is possible that the HRWET committee membership may need to be revised to craft the message on the value of water service. The HRWET committee is holding a planning meeting in June to review the efforts over the past year and ways to include the sustainable utility message. The Directors of Utilities Committee should consider

using the Drinking Water Quality Education funding to reinforce the messages of tap water quality and sustainability.

It was agreed that HRPDC staff will vet the recommendations from the June HRWET committee planning meeting with the Directors of Utilities Committee. Staff will provide HRWET/HRFOG committee status updates at future Directors of Utilities Committee meetings.

Due to time constraints, the Committee agreed to discuss other water-related HRPDC staff work program items at a future meeting.

ACTION: The Committee will review the recommendations from the June HRWET committee planning meeting.

4. Wastewater Program

Ms. Julia Hillegass provided an overview of the wastewater education programs and budget elements and a handout summarizing FY12 promotions for FOG awareness. The online FOG training program is currently under development, however, only about half of localities have adopted FOG ordinances. The Committee noted some push-back from restaurants that are deactivating grease traps. Additionally, a specific vendor is promoting to restaurants the use of a liquid drain treatment that emulsifies FOG; the use of such emulsifiers is prohibited in FOG ordinances. The general consensus is that, while emulsifiers loosen blockages in laterals and lines near the point of application, grease reconstitutes further downstream and impacts the public system. HRSD does, however, allow the use of emulsifiers in the wastewater treatment process. The vendor contacted staff with a request to address HRPDC; staff will accommodate the vendor at a future HRFOG committee meeting.

It was suggested that HRPDC staff examine how FOG messaging has helped reduce the number of stoppages. The Committee endorsed the HRFOG committee's idea of including messaging on what not to flush, as the intent of such a message is to prevent stoppages.

It was clarified that future utility rate data calls should request the number of "active" water and sewer accounts.

Due to time constraints, the Committee agreed to discuss other wastewater-related HRPDC staff work program items at a future meeting.

5. Future Work Program Development Process

The Committee discussed the timing of locality budget development, the HRPDC/Committee budget development, and the annual Committee retreat. In order to coordinate the Committee's retreat and budget discussion with locality budget

development, it was agreed that the annual retreat should be held in late September/early October. The full Committee will participate in the retreat, and the agenda should include future projects, draft program budgets, and allocation planning for carryover funds. It was recommended that the retreat discussion be conducted at the beginning of the meeting, prior to other committee business.