BACWA Recycled Water Committee Meeting Notes
September 28, 2021
Meeting held via videoconference

1. Introductions (Olson)

Stefanie Olson, Co-Chair  DSRSD
Reena Thomas, Co-chair  EBMUD
Annahita Fallah  SFPUC
Anita Jain  West Yost
Billy Dixon  Sonoma County Water
Cheryl Muñoz  City of Hayward
Christopher Bolt  City of Petaluma
Dan Frost  Central San
Diego Martinez Garcia  City of Palo Alto
Henry Louie  South Bay Water Recycl.
Ileana Alvarado  Valley Water
Jason Farnsworth  Petaluma
Jonathan Brownlee  SFPUC
June Leng  HDR
Laila Mufty  City of Palo Alto
Mark Grushayev  SASM
Mary Cousins  BACWA
Medi Sinaki  Valley Water
Melanie Tan  Kennedy Jenks
Melody LaBella  Central San
Michael Falk  HDR
Natasha Dunn  San Francisco Estuary Partnership
Nick Steiner  Delta Diablo
Nole Studley  Marin Water
Pedro Hernandez  South Bay Water Recycling
Rachel Mixon  Valley Water
Rhodora Biagtan  West Yost
Richard Foss  Central San
Sarah Rhodes  Woodard & Curran
Sindy Mulyono  Redwood City
Stefanie Olson  DSRS
Tom Hall  EOA
Will Burrell  Regional Water Board

2. Funding Opportunities

Federal and State (Reena Thomas, EBMUD):
The large infrastructure bill is still waiting in Congress, with about $1B for western water recycling and related
efforts. The budget bill ("continuing resolution") is also waiting, with $200M for Bureau of Reclamation to combat
drought in the west and Title XVI authorized projects.

Governor Newsom recently signed a climate action bill that included $200M for recycled water, including $50M for
San Diego’s Pure Water project, funding for groundwater cleanup, and other water projects.

State (Medi Sinaki, Valley Water):
To respond to drought, the May revision of the California state budget funds water resilience efforts with $4.35B
over multiple years ($3.475B in FY22), which includes $2.8B General Fund, $1.54B in federal American Rescue
Plan Act funds, and $10.5M bond and special funds. These investments build on the $757M included in the
Governor’s Budget for a total of $5.1Bn proposed water resilience investments.

3. Regional Recycled Water Evaluation Update

Mike Falk (HDR) provided an update on the Regional Recycled Water Evaluation. HDR/Woodard & Curran has
prepared 13 complete drafts of individual plant reports, and 4 are in progress. Draft reports will be sent to these
agencies in October, and agencies will have a 2-3 week review period. The summary tables will include flow and
nitrogen load information expressed both as an annual average and as a dry season average.

4. Recycled Water Demand Management

The group discussed the need for recycled water conservation measures. No members reported significant
curtailments on recycled water deliveries, but some would consider public outreach as a first step. The need for
conservation can result from insufficient supply, insufficient storage, or from hydraulic restrictions in the
distribution system. South Bay Water Recycling staff noted that they completed a recycled water use efficiency
study to break down the use areas that see the highest peak demand, and developed customer strategies to
reduce demand if needed (example: change timing of filling golf course ponds). DSRSD staff noted that they are looking into rebates for lawn conversion and smart meters. Redwood City provides water budget information to recycled water customers; this information is not used to establish billing rates (i.e., there is not a financial penalty for going over budget) but the messaging promotes conservation.

5. Recycled Water Commercial Truck Fill Guide

Mary Cousins, BACWA Regulatory Program Manager, requested feedback on the draft Recycled Water Commercial Truck Fill Guide by the end of the week so that the guide can be finalized on Friday.

Last week, committee representatives met with Sherly Rosilela and Ginachi Amah of the State Water Resources Control Board’s Division of Drinking Water (DDW) to discuss regulatory issues related to commercial truck fill programs. DDW advises that the use of recycled water across jurisdictional boundaries is not an issue so long as it is clear who is legally responsible for carrying out the recycled water program regulatory responsibilities, including ability to enforce program requirements and be responsible for violations by recycled water users when those violations translate to permit violations (e.g., cross connections). Should this setup be proposed, DDW would be looking for this information in the Title 22 Engineering Report.

Monitoring users (a requirement of the 2016 State Order) and prevention of cross connections is a concern for recycled water crossing jurisdictional boundaries for both commercial and residential fill stations. Cross connections are a particularly high concern for residential customers due to lack of backflow prevention assemblies on domestic services. The group discussed possible ways to provide legal enforceability across jurisdictional boundaries, such as signing interagency agreements (as proposed by DDW); requiring commercial truck fill operators to obtain permits in multiple jurisdictions; requiring truck fill operators to separately seek out an agreement with the other jurisdictions (Redwood City approach); or requiring truck fill operators to obtain their own permit coverage (for a large operation). Committee members pointed out that the 2020 NOA for coverage under the statewide general order allows some latitude for administration of recycled water programs. The NOA states (page 3):

2. The Region 2 Administrator is required to obtain Regional Water Board and DDW written approval for any changes to the Administrator’s approved program prior to implementing the changes. For example: new recycled water use types, treatment methods, or distribution methods not already described in the Administrator’s approved program.

The NOA clearly allows administrators to add new truck fill customers, but is not clear about the approvals needed for allowing truckers to transport water across jurisdictional boundaries. Some members felt that NOA does not require submittal of a new Title 22 Engineering Report given that extending service across jurisdictional boundaries is not a new use type, treatment method, or distribution method.

City of Hayward staff noted that they have recently received a DDW letter with conditions of approval for operation of a truck fill station, which could be a useful reference document. DDW cannot provide written guidance on detailed requirements for truck fill operations; example approval letters are the only guidance.

DDW clarified that duplication of service is not a concern, despite language in Section 13578(b) of the California Water Code that could have been interpreted this way. Loss of demand and revenue is a concern that has been expressed by some potable water retailers. For DDW, cross connections and other public health threats are the primary concern with respect to transport of recycled water across jurisdictional boundaries.

6. WateReuse Conference

Medi Sinaki reported that the WateReuse conference was well-attended and included many great presentations on potable reuse. Declining flows was also a major theme. The committee may pursue presentations on potable reuse in the future. Valley Water is the only water agency pursuing potable reuse in the Bay Area at this time, but many projects are moving forward in southern California.

7. Legislation and Regulatory Update

The Direct Potable Reuse (DPR) expert panel met last month and was receptive to the many comments received. They were open to building flexibility into the draft guidelines. More information including a recording of the expert panel meeting is available here.
The DWR Working Group for the variance on ET₀ for recycled water irrigation due to high TDS is continuing its discussions and looking for more specific examples. There is an issue with the variance only applying if TDS is higher than a certain threshold.

DWR is continuing to work on the Plumbing Code update and is working on addressing language that the Plumbing Code only applies to systems inside the building and not exterior irrigation systems.

DWR’s Urban and Multi-benefit Drought Relief grant program proposal solicitation package is now available as a public draft. Applications will be accepted once the solicitation package is finalized, later in Fall 2021. More information is available on the DWR website.

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, November 16, 10:30 AM by Zoom.