SOUTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY

ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

MAY 22, 2025

MEETING TRANSCRIPTION

[ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING STARTS AT 12:46 P.M.]

David:

All right, Mario, it's all yours.

Mario:

Okay. Thank you very much. The first item on the agenda for Environmental, Health and Safety is the minutes of March 27, 2025. If there could be a motion to approve the minutes.

Kevin:

Move to approve the minutes as presented.

Catherine:

I'll second that.

Mario:

Thank you very much. Any comments, amendments? Hearing none, all those in favor say aye.

Committee members:

Aye.

Mario:

Opposed and abstaining? Thank you. The next item is emerging trends in environmental health and safety. I'm going to turn it over to Sunny for the presentation, but as you go through and you look at these, think about how they... Sunny's prepared them essentially how they affect our operations as we go forward as a board. Think about how they might affect the overall organization and futuristic items as a board as opposed to the operational. So, Sunny?

Sunny:

Yeah, I can go through the presentations real quick and then if you have questions, depending on the kind of questions, if you want to, you can go into an executive session. But most of these I've kept it, we can discuss in a public session. So, these are the upcoming regulatory issues that is being contemplated at this time, both at the state and at the federal levels. The affordability is something that is being contemplated. The cybersecurity there is this HR7922 bill that is in Washington at this time.

This primarily deals with cybersecurity resilience and all that. If there are more requirements that are going to come up, there could be some impacts the way that we look at engaging third parties and doing some audits and recommendations. So there could be some cost impacts as well in terms of bringing us up to speed. The fluoridation, again, it's another hot topic that's with the administration change.

Currently, I think EPA is looking at some study that they want to do in terms of whether there is any deleterious effects due to fluorides being added and the Department of Health and Human Services is also looking into it.

So based on how that goes, we could see some changes coming from the federal level. But meanwhile, Connecticut also has a senate bill that is 1326, which could be supplementing if not even if the federal levels change, the state can come in and say you need to do 0.7 milligrams per [inaudible 00:19:42]. So that's where we are on that. The PFAS circular exemption. This was tried in the last few years. Again, still, this is the last I saw. Again, there were two house members which have a bill there most likely. This should get support this time and hopefully this is on the waste side of it. So both on the wastewater as well as the water side because we do have solids generated from the filtration. So this should give us some exemption.

The LCRI regulations, again, judicial review has been initiated whether the LCRI will remain or they'll go back to the LCRR, which was there till October 20, 2024. LCRI came into existence as of October 21st or October 10th, 2024 if the LCRR goes. Or they may repeal it too or extend the timeline, which was given an LCRI to be done in 10 years. So those are the impacts which we have seen. In terms of the microbial and disinfected byproducts, again, it could establish tougher compliance standards with regards to legionella and microbials, some parasites and all that. So that could be impacting the future trends of how we do treatment. At this point of time, it is still being contemplated. So those are the four or five major areas that we are tracking both at the state level as well as the federal levels. If you want to go to the next slide.

On the PFAS, I think this is pretty clear in terms of where we are. We doing the initial data collection as well as the analysis. The only concern we have at this time is the Cheshire Well field, which we are not using that much. We just run it once a week maybe just to keep it running. So if at all we need to do treatment, we will probably require treatment at that. That's where I think the third point comes in where this is going to tie into the monthly report as well because we filed our first patent application for Regional Water Authority, which is a good step. So that comes into the powder activated carbon. If it is successful, we might be able to deploy the same technology as a very captive consumption for us and then try to see how we can monetize that IP.

So in terms of the class action lawsuits, we are following up with the attorneys who are helping us out. There has been some back and forth in terms of refiling, submitting more lab analysis and reports. The 3M and DuPont where we stood with regards to Tyco and BASF, we are going to participate and that'll be done towards the end of August where we are going to do some more paperwork and things of that sort. So the lab is working on another certification that is the latest one 533.1.

I think already Rich is working on it. We should be getting that soon. It enables us to broaden the scope of the PFAS compounds, which we can test, and that is something we want to get. It'll put us again, maybe one or two firms at this point. So we'll be at least the leader in that 533.1. Again, the PFAS regulation under review by EPA and American Waterworks has requested a judicial review of the PFAS as well. So most likely from what we hear instead of the 2029 deadlines, it might move to 2031 for compliance. So that's the big picture on the in PFAS.

In terms of water quality and quantity. We just touched upon the quality issues with regards to the contaminants as well as the regulatory impacts. This gives you an overall view of how regional managers... If you want to go to the next one. So the PFAS algae related organics, the manganese, then we have phosphorus, nitrogen, all of those things. We are also tracking the UCMR6, which currently is under contemplation. There is umpteen contaminants there. Eventually what will be part of UCMR6 is something we don't know yet. Once that starts coming in, we should be able to understand what the

impact to us is and then based on it, we'll start doing our analysis. So we are watching that closely, both from the water quality side as well as from the lab side.

The PFAS update, I just went over that. The pilot treatment testing initiatives were very successful. That's pretty much the pilot. Also, we are using the nodes truck, which was again pretty good. So we didn't really build a pilot. The nodes helps us to test these things. So not bad actually. So again, the lead service line detection, that is something that we are doing. Residual sludge management. So if you look at the fiscal 26 work plan, there is one thing which I put in for innovation and all that. So I'll be updating all of these things when the next update comes in. The climate change is another one which we are following closely. Most of the models nowadays incorporate climate change. We don't really see any specific issues in terms of how it is going to affect us because we have a significant amount of demand and supply where the delta is pretty significantly positively skewed towards us, which gives us enough luxury to be there.

In terms of some of let's say the Spring Street pump station or 90 Sargent, those could be affected in different way not the water supply itself. The terms of the structures getting affected due to higher flood levels, that is a different issue altogether. So if you want to go to the next one. On the water quantity... You can go to the next one. The water quantity slide, this is a very interesting slide because if you look at how 1950 to 2015, you will see it went up and then it became a plateau and now it's going down. But most of it is driven by the yellow, which is the thermoelectric power usage.

It could be renewables also more efficient in terms of how the carbon-based power plants are operating right now. But if you look at the blue line, which is actually the public water supply that's been slowly having a marginal increase, that's the blue bar that is going up. So that is not showing a decrease. So predominantly the decrease is coming from more the irrigation usage, again due to technology as well as the technology helping out in terms of the thermoelectric power and switching over to more renewable sources. So US has, at this point of time, I think US is still the leader in terms of the most number of solar wind. China could pretty much become the leader maybe in the next five to 10 years, but US still has the most number of renewable energy projects in terms of gigawatts.

But the public water supply is very interesting to note that it is increasing. So a few observations that we saw was both at the national local levels, you see this dropping, but when we go to the water supply, which we project, there is a very marginal increase. If you want to go to the next slide. So there is a very marginal increase. This is based on the water supply plan that we did based on population projections and all that. From 2045 to 2070, there's almost a 10% increase. But again, we have to validate these assumptions in terms of whether there's going to be growth because the bottom left, the bottom right graph, which shows the population estimates actually going down for Connecticut.

So there could be other reasons why our modeling shows a small increase, but that could be driven by many other things where we could be bringing in more residents into maybe some more, I would say commercial use, maybe industrial use, we don't know yet. But 2045 onwards, we do show that increase. This is something that we have to validate with Hazen who did the modeling for us because they go through an elaborate process of getting the demand data and supply data and doing the projection. So that is where we are in terms of how we are looking at the demand. So overall, our supply side of it, we are almost at mid-fifties. Which means it gives us enough question of delta of 10 million gallons a day. So summer it's a little bit, I would say tougher because our summer peak day average would be somewhere maybe sixties. So those days would be tougher. But overall on average, the yearly average, we are still okay.

On the climate change. We are modeling everything pretty much in terms of how we want to see for the next almost 40, 50 years. We have done several models for us. So any models that we do now

incorporates climate change into it. So there is many stochastic models which we have done, and overall we are okay. As I said, there could be structures which will be impacted, but I think water should not be an issue for us in terms of supply. So I think in summary, just go to the, yeah... This I would say elaborates a little bit more on the details on how I would say the impacts to Connecticut could be. If you want to go to the next one.

The impacts to regional, we are looking at risk reduction because when we went through even the capital planning and budgets, you had seen how some of these things were impacted by the risk and resiliency and where we had to spend some monies. I think these are some of the examples we picked up from the capital budgets to show how we are addressing the risk. And this ties into the risk memo as well. So when we do the water infrastructure assessment as part of AWWA, one of the things that is pretty significant is natural hazards. So there are evaluations that we did as part of the 24 exercise. This ties into that risk as well. So climate change is another risk which was introduced as part of this 24 exercise as well as many of the natural, whether it's going to be hurricanes or whether it's going to be earthquakes, that is part of the risk assessment. So any questions?

Mario:

Questions? There's none. A couple that I had, just the fluoridation obviously on the federal level, they're looking to remove fluoridation at the state level or they're looking to maintain fluoridation.

Sunny:

Correct.

Mario:

Is AWWA or any other organizations that we are members of looking at how that will actually affect our position? Because if we have federal laws that say one thing, state laws that say the other, are we just going to be sitting back waiting for the lawsuits to occur? Or are we going to be subject to individuals saying, "Oh, well we can sue our water company because they're poisoning us according to the federal government."

Sunny:

This is something that we have taken up even with DPH [inaudible 00:30:25], right? That is part of CWWA, as well as CTAWWA. So I did talk to the section chief maybe a few weeks ago, and they're also wondering how to tackle this because at the end of the day, we are going to be regulated by DPH. So this is a concern that they have, which all of the utilities in the state have expressed it. Gray areas, yet there isn't a significant path forward in terms of which would be the standards we will adopt. But it is an evolving thing which they're keeping an eye on because they're also not sure which way it's going to come up. But this is on the radar screen of not just CWWA as well as CTAWWA, well as DPH too. So they're working.

David:

Can I just... Related to that, would we not be held harmless if we're following the DPH rules, which is what we have to do?

Sunny:

I know Mario's question is more like you're not following the federal law because the research is very gray on this. So there is enough research that does say fluorides are good. Some of the European countries have dropped it. Some of the countries, if you look around the globe, especially in India where I have seen fluorides are there in the water where we remove the fluorides from water. So it does cause teeth decay. There is latest research, which is what the HHS is focusing on, where it could be carcinogenic. Okay. Again, early research, going multiple ways. Not sure exactly where this will end up, but the only thing, as I said, even Tim Slocum asked during the last RBP meeting as a water utility, we follow what DPH and EPA says. So if there is a stalemate between the feds and the state, I think those will have to get resolved at that level and we follow whatever we have to follow.

David:

Thank you.

Mario:

That's very important to distinguish there. I thought it was very interesting that in a very fairly short timeframe, the average consumption is 53 gallons per capita day. And not too long ago it was a hundred gallons per capita a day for planning purposes. 80 was the actual, so that's a significant drop in the use of water. I would definitely question Hazen's projections for the water needs, but that's okay if we're doing that. And then just one last lakes salt and soil water treatment plant by gravity thickeners, we had that because of risk associated with failures and customer impact as a prioritized risk reduction. Is it because there's a single gravity thickener and you're looking to duplicate that?

Sunny:

Not necessarily. I think it was just the age of their equipment at some point.

Mario:

Got you. Any other questions on this [inaudible 00:33:30]? In that case we'll move to the legislative issues to update. Busy session up in Hartford. Are you going to also tackle this one?

Sunny:

I could tackle it.

Mario:

There was a memo that was included. I guess if there's any questions on the memo.

No questions? We'll get a final update after the session closes. And hopefully none of these sneak back in during the middle of the night for the next couple of weeks.

Sunny:

Yes.

Mario:

Well you're never safe, right? And the last is the work plan. These are some draft ideas for next year's work plan. I think we want to keep emerging trends on the work plan that's not listed here, but certainly

population migration and water use are biggies. Also, infrastructure and almost like grading where our infrastructure would be except for a recession and the type of work. But as we become more intelligent, if you will, in our use of asset management and able to look at what our assets are to be able to say we've improved is... If you think about the age of our pipes and you think about the age of some of the equipment, I think we're doing a good job in keeping up with that. And safety obviously we'll have to sprinkle that in as we figure out what's going on and our water supply, especially as we look at a regional water supply planning. Any comments, questions, things that you want to see or not see?

David:

Just one, I'm sorry I didn't call you before, but I didn't actually notice it until a little while ago. The interim, in May, the legislature will end the first Wednesday of May that year...

Mario:

That would be four.

David:

So that would probably be able to be considered the final update. If we want to make midyear update, you might want to do that in March, mid-session update and maybe move one of the large items later. But you can figure that as you get closer and you certainly have discretion as chair to move things around.

Mario:

All right. Any other items?

David:

That was all.

Mario:

Okay. And I think that that is the end of the... Unless you have something else.

Sunny:

[inaudible 00:36:14].

Mario:

I will entertain a motion that we adjourn as the Environmental Health and Safety Committee and reconvene.

Suzanne:

So moved.

David:

Thank you. And is there a second?

Kevin:

Second.

Mario:

Thank you. All those in favor?

Committee members:

Aye.

Mario:

Opposed? Thank you. Unanimous. Thank you very much.

[ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING ADJOURNS AT 1:06 P.M.]