

SAFER Drinking Water Advisory Group Meeting #1

Meeting Notes | March 3, 2022

Overview

The Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) Advisory Group (AG) meeting included discussions on the SAFER drinking water needs assessment and outreach and engagement strategy. Staff shared written updates on SAFER program goal progress, point-of-use/point-of-entry pilot project, drinking water and wastewater infrastructure funding, water debt relief (arrearages) program, and upcoming SAFER events and deadlines.

Drinking Water Needs Assessment Discussion

AG members shared their recommendations and concerns on each of the sections of the *SAFER 2022 Needs Assessment*.

Risk Assessment for Public Water Systems

- There was overall agreement with incorporating drought indicators in the Risk Assessment. Several recommendations were made related to drought risk, including:
 - Include source types and number of connections,
 - Incorporate response level exceedances (ex: PFOA/PFAS) because taking source water out of service could impact water security, affordability, and drought response,
 - Prioritize communities that are more at-risk of experiencing day zero (0) situations,
 - Add water hauler's experience and challenges.
- Concern about including water systems with over 3300 connections and a recommendation to prioritize small systems and systems with less source capacity.
- Concern about the removal of extensive treatment installed and maximum duration of high potential exposure risk indicators. Recommendation to add an indicator to capture how many years a water system has been out of compliance.
- Concern about how MHI is used and the impact of mixed-income levels within communities. Examples of small mobile home parks/ Polanco parks were raised and a recommendation to ground truth assessment with community visits and local analysis.
- Concern about water systems receiving risk points if they are in critically over-drafted basins because the location of the wells matters.
- Include the use of treated or raw water and the expenses of interties.

Risk Assessment for State Small Water Systems & Domestic Wells

- Register every well, measure water usage, implement extraction limitations, and provide resources to domestic well owners to have an active role in these processes. If counties can't enforce this, then the State should take on a stronger role in addressing impacts of groundwater pumping.

Cost Assessment

- Fire flow data should be included to build more climate change resilience in communities.

Affordability Assessment

- Arrearage data took place during a pandemic, it may not be as applicable for other years.
- Water bill debt/affordability does not reflect water system affordability.

Questions

- Is there a checklist that comes with the risk indicators so that water systems can specifically target criteria under each indicator?
- Can fire flow consideration be included in the SAFER funded construction applications?
- How do we get missing information from wells that are not registered?
- Can the Risk Assessment Map be used to cross-referenced with other well data?
- Does the extreme water bill indicator include both the cost of 6 hundred cubic feet of water and service charge? What is the extreme water bill cost?
- Will Senate Bill 552 apply to Counties, Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs), Regional Water Boards, the State Water Board, and the Department of Water Resources (DWR)?

Outreach And Engagement Strategy

AG members shared their feedback on the *SAFER Outreach and Engagement Strategy*. All feedback was related to best practices and recommendations for insuring community partners, advocacy groups and local governments are informed and involved in the outreach process.

- Overall positive feedback about outreach and engagement strategy.
- Collaborate with community-based organizations, EJ organizations, natural resources advocates, counties, regional water governance groups, water advocates, housing rights and immigration rights organizations. These groups know a community very well, are trusted, and have a much farther reach, especially for undocumented water customers. Utilize all existing touch points to be more efficient.

Questions

- How much funding is available for Community Partners?
- How will the Outreach Partners work with counties or other agencies?
- How many water systems will Community Partners be assigned to?
- How will Community Partners work with Technical Assistance providers?
- How is outreach being received by the people we are trying to outreach to?

NEXT STEPS

- Staff provided additional information on the upcoming events.
- Staff will come with updates to Senate Bill 552 at a future Advisory Group meeting.

Advisory Group Attendance (P= present, A= absent)

Horacio Amezcuita: P

Jennifer Hazard: P

Jonathan Rash: P

Sergio Carranza: P

Jianmin Huang: P

Michael Rincon: P

Kassy Chauhan: P

Don James: P

Emily Rooney: P

Victor Chavarin Jr: A

Rami Kahlon: P

Isabel Solorio: P

Sandra Chavez: P

Maria Luisa Muñoz: P

James Sullivan: P

Esther Espinoza: P

Camille Pannu: P

Ethel See Winchell: P

Cástulo Estrada: P

Michael S. Prado Sr.: P

State Water Board Attendance

Division of Drinking Water: Andrew Altevogt, Kristyn Abhold, Michelle Frederick,

Division of Financial Assistance: Jasmine Oaxaca, Meghan Tosney

Office of Public Participation: Adriana Renteria, Amanda Ford, Haydee Yonamine, Itzel Vasquez-Rodriguez