

**Texas Commission on Environmental Quality**  
**WATER UTILITY OPERATOR LICENSING**  
**ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** April 14, 2025

**Time:** 9:00 a.m.

**Location:** 12100 Park 35 Circle, F2210, Austin, Texas and  
Virtual Meeting through Microsoft Teams

**Members Attending**

Larry Bell  
Angel Bustamante  
Adam Farguson  
David Garza  
Melissa Loyd  
Joseph McDaniel  
Eduardo Montaña  
Wesley Nebgen

\*Members attending virtually were directed to turn on their cameras to facilitate participation.

\*\*Visitors were directed to turn off their cameras to alleviate buffering and internet bandwidth.

**Members Absent**

Zachary Lillie  
Cory Moose  
Raymond Perez  
Leanne Wilson  
Harrold Burris

**Visitors**

David Van Riper  
Tanny Busby  
Crystal Bowman  
Melissa Loyd  
John Walden  
Cijo Jose  
Gary Sober  
Karen Menard  
Edward J Williams

**TCEQ Staff Attending:**

Jaya Zyman, Occupational Licensing and Registration Division (OLRD)  
Tamara Calhoun, OLRD  
Teresa Etheredge, OLRD  
Paul Munguia, OLRD  
Chance Rushing, OLRD  
Kenneth Smith, OLRD  
Samantha Royall, OLRD  
Ariel Williams, OLRD  
Dorothy Young, WSD  
Leticia DeLeon, WSD  
Jason Robinson, SBLG

**Call to order:**

The meeting was called to order by Moderator Paul Munguia.

**Member Introductions:**

All attending members introduced themselves.

Quorum check – quorum present.

**Approval of Minutes:**

It was noted that the committee did not meet in January due to a lack of business items.

A motion to approve the meeting minutes from October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024, was made by Adam N. Farguson and seconded by Joseph McDaniel all members approved.

## **Water Supply Division (WSD) Updates: Dorothy Young**

**Legislative Updates**

This legislative session has introduced numerous bills related to water, water funding, water operations, the Public Utility Commission, and drought contingency planning. Many of these bills are currently in committee review.

**Upcoming Meetings and Events**

Drinking Water Advisory Workgroup (DWAAG) will meet on April 15, 2025, at 9:00 AM. This quarterly meeting mirrors today's format and includes updates from the division and discussion of stakeholder topics. Details and registration are available at [the TCEQ website](#).

[Texas Water Infrastructure Coordination Committee \(TWICC\)](#) meets every 2 months. TWICC assists small water systems in identifying funding and regulatory support. Stakeholders with projects or funding barriers are encouraged to contact Dorothy Young for potential inclusion on the agenda.

Annual Drinking Water Conference will be held August 5-6, 2025, in Austin. This year will feature an increased number of workshops. Registration is expected to open in June on the TCEQ website.

**Programs and Resources**

**Free On-Site Assistance** is available through TCEQ's [FMT \(Financial, Managerial, and Technical\)](#). This includes support for water operators and systems needing technical help.

The [Texas Optimization Program](#) provides specialized training and assistance with water quality or chemistry issues.

Additional support organizations include:

- Communities Unlimited
- Water Finance Exchange

Members are encouraged to reach out directly to Dorothy to be connected with these resources, particularly for struggling water systems.

### **Drought Workshops**

Two drought-focused workshops are being planned for later this year similar to one previously hosted in McAllen/the Valley area:

- Hill Country Region (Kerrville/Bandera), Date to be determined
- South Texas Region (Mathis/Beeville/Kennedy), Date to be determined

These sessions will feature technical training in the morning (topics such as water loss, leak detection, rate setting) and networking with funding and assistance agencies in the afternoon.

### **Q&A Session**

Member Question:

Concern raised about possible federal-level funding rollbacks under the current administration.

Response:

The Water Supply Division is primarily impacted by federal funding through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund and the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. These remain in the federal budget for now, and national support continues to prioritize these funds. Other federal programs may be subject to changes, but many remain in a "wait and see" phase.

Member Clarification Question:

Is the Drinking Water Advisory Workgroup (DWA WG) meeting the same as the Water Quality Advisory Workgroup (WQA WG)?

Response:

The two are separate but parallel meetings:

- DWA WG (Drinking Water): Morning of April 15
- WQA WG (Water Quality): Afternoon of April 15

Both provide similar information and updates but focus on different aspects (drinking water vs. wastewater).

## **Cybersecurity Updates and Requirements: Leticia DeLeon**

### **Current Cybersecurity Landscape**

Increasing Incidents: There is significant and frequent movement on the cybersecurity front, with updates received weekly from the **Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR)** for appropriate action.

Multiple water systems are being affected by cyber incidents, with some systems' SCADA infrastructure being found on the dark web.

If contacted by the **Texas DIR** or Leticia directly, systems are urged to **take the call**—they may be notified of a potential or active cyber incident.

**Verification:** Credentials can be provided if recipients are unsure about the legitimacy of the call.

### **When to Notify TCEQ**

**Mandatory Reporting:** Unexplained or unauthorized entries at water facilities must be reported to **TCEQ after** contacting **local law enforcement**. Obtain:

- An incident number from local law enforcement
- Any information necessary in case you need to reach out to your insurance company (severe damages etc.)

Examples of Required Incidents to Report to TCEQ:

- Acts of terrorism against the public water system – also reach out to the FBI and CISA
- Unauthorized access attempts to sensitive data or systems (including billing systems).
- Theft of property supporting key water system functions.
- Cybersecurity incidents and natural disasters impacting operations.

TCEQ toll-free Water/Wastewater System Homeland Security Threat Hot Line (888-777-3186)

### **State Reporting Requirements**

As of September 1, 2023, state law mandates that:

- **Local governments** must report security incidents to [Texas Department of Information Resources Cybersecurity Incident Management and Reporting](#) within **48 hours** of discovery.
- Businesses and organizations experiencing breaches impacting 250 or more Texans must notify the [Texas Attorney General Data Breach Reporting](#) within 30 days of discovery.

### **Federal Reporting Requirements**

Under the Cyber Incident Reporting for Critical Infrastructure Act ([CIRCA](#), 2022):

- Community water systems or treatment works serving more than 3,300 people must report cyber incidents and ransomware payments to CISA.
- Regulations are being developed to formalize this reporting structure.
- [Covered Entity Under CIRCA.pdf](#)
- [Report a Cyber Issue](#)

### **Upcoming Federal Legislation**

Two federal bills are under consideration to potentially establish a national cybersecurity agency for critical infrastructure, including drinking water and wastewater systems.

## **Types of Incidents Observed**

**SCADA Attacks:** Several smaller utilities have had their **SCADA systems compromised**, including forced activation of wells and loss of access due to password changes.

**Billing System Breaches:** One city in Texas experienced a billing system compromise.

**Long-Term Infiltration:** A Massachusetts system was infiltrated and monitored for approximately 300 days before the FBI intervened.

## **Available Support and Resources**

Free Services:

- **CISA** offers free vulnerability testing for municipalities.
- **EPA** and **DIR** also offer free scanning services.

**Ransomware Recovery:** The **FBI** typically handles ransomware cases and assists with recovery.

## **Member Contributions**

A member highlighted **CISA's free testing services** that simulate cyberattacks to identify vulnerabilities. These services are strongly recommended for all municipalities.

## **Water Quality Division (WQD) Updates**

No representative available to attend meeting.

New WQD Contact Dania Grundmann - [danial.gundmann@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:danial.gundmann@tceq.texas.gov)

## **Occupational Licensing (OL) Updates: Jaya Zyman, Tamara Calhoun, Paul Munguia**

### **Licensing Statistics**

Licensing statistics for the recent quarters of the current fiscal year were shared ahead of the meeting via email and are available in print for in-person attendees. No major changes were noted in the data. The statistics, which include pass rates for exams, are provided for monitoring purposes.

### **Rule Implementation & Updates**

The recently adopted rule changes became effective March 23, 2025. These include:

**Delivery Methods:** Training delivery is now categorized as:

- *In-person or Live Online:* Includes classroom courses, conferences, and association meetings; these can be repeated during a renewal period.
- *Self-paced:* Includes pre-recorded training or correspondence courses; non-repeatable within the same renewal period as they offer identical content.

**Instructor Qualification Review Fee:** A \$10 per course fee will be charged when submitting standalone instructor qualifications (i.e., adding a new instructor to an

already-approved course). This does not apply when instructors are submitted with a new course application. Implementation is expected within the next month.

#### License Program Updates:

- LPST renewal CE hours have been reduced from 32 to 20.
- Class D Provisional Water/Wastewater licenses are now formally included in the rules.
- "Renew by Exam" has been removed for Water and Wastewater licenses due to resiliency CE requirement for all water renewals, included wastewater to limit confusion, and the testing renewal option was rarely used overall.

Digital Licensing: Rules now permit digital licenses. While not yet implemented, feedback is welcomed. Digital licensing could reduce delays and improve access.

#### Training Search Webpage Updates

Software design is in progress for approved trainings to be automatically updated on the TCEQ webpage. This would include upcoming conferences and have options for licensees to filter for specific hours, programs, etc.

#### Resiliency Training Clarification

The online CE record for the resiliency column is strictly for continuing education credit only. The *Resiliency Overview Course* is required for initial licensure and is NOT coded as continuing education (CE). The resiliency column will appear as "No" in the online CE record. However, for those licensed before the rule change, the *Resiliency Overview Course* may count toward the resiliency CE requirement one time only during either of the two following the implementation of the requirement.

- During the **single renewal period** that these licensed individuals take the *Resiliency Overview Course* the **resiliency column** will appear as "No" in the online CE record however the **resiliency requirement** will be **considered met** for this renewal period.

All other renewal cycles resiliency CE is required, and this column will change to "Yes".

All licensed individuals must take *Resiliency Overview Course* at least once. *Resiliency CE Courses* are distinct from the overview course. Operators must ensure they are selecting CE-designated training for future renewals.

Training can be accumulated across multiple events to meet the 2-hour resiliency CE requirement. Providers are encouraged to apply for CE credit for sessions within conferences and other trainings.

#### Resiliency CE Approval

Resiliency CE requirements include content covering one of the legislatively directed resiliency topics, subject matter expert(on topic being presented) presenter bios, course summaries, etc. General and training type specific requirements can be found in RG-373. These apply to all licensing programs and program specific requirements i.e. Resiliency.

For conferences and other types of trainings covering Resiliency content, providers should meet applicable requirements for their training type found in RG-373 and are **encouraged to note in their application a request for resiliency credit** as applicable.

Future updates to the application form will include a spot to mark resiliency along with other RG-373 updates now that these changes have been codified in rule.

Additional application requirements and recent rule updates can be found on the TCEQ OL Training Provider webpage. These are being combined into the RG-373 updates for the future.

### **RG-373 Revisions**

This guidance is being updated for clarity and to reflect recent rule changes, including definitions, application form, instructor qualification form, and to overall increase its user friendliness. Updates will be released in conjunction with the new instructor qualification review form.

### **Communication & Notifications**

Licensing notices (e.g., exam analyses, approvals, deficiency letters) are now primarily sent via email. If two emails are on file, both will receive communications. If no email is on file, regular mail will be used. Applicants are urged to check spam folders and keep contact information up to date.

### **Student Course Surveys**

Post-course surveys are being developed and will be sent to students via email, using roster information on file. Survey results may help prioritize audits and address concerns (e.g., lack of course materials).

### **Job Task Analyses (JTAs)**

JTAs are underway for UST and LPST licensing tracks. Surveys will be used to inform exam updates.

### **Legislative Updates**

Over 50 bills are being monitored, with 37 directly impacting occupational licensing. Highlights include:

#### **License Renewal Grace Period Extension:**

Proposed change to extend post-expiration renewal window from 30 days to up to one year (with tiered fees).

#### **National Backflow Certification Recognition:**

Proposal to allow nationally certified testers to work in Texas without a TCEQ license. Most states do not have their own BPAT license. Pending language to ensure Texas-specific knowledge if passed.

#### **New OSSF Pumper Registration:**

Proposed legislation to create a new license for septic waste haulers. If passed, a new program will be developed.

### **Confidential Information and Licensee Directory Project**

Background: A bill passed last session prohibits publishing confidential licensee information (e.g., names, phone numbers) online.

Impact: Employers and stakeholders report difficulty locating licensed professionals.

Response: TCEQ Legal advised OL section that licensees can voluntarily authorize release of select information.

Action: TCEQ OL developed an authorization form allowing licensees to opt in and choose what info (phone, email, address, licenses) to share.

Current Status:

- Form is online.
- Over 800 licensees have opted in.
- Directory will be updated regularly (monthly, tentatively) once executive approval is obtained.
- Licensees may revoke consent at any time.

This pertains to licensee information only.

Training provider contact information is public unless requested otherwise (confidentiality rules apply only to licensees).

### **New DPS Criminal History Form Requirement**

All applicants not enrolled in fingerprint subscription must now complete a DPS notification form confirming they are aware of their option to submit fingerprints.

Applies To: All applicants without fingerprint subscriptions active with TCEQ.

Exception: Applicants with fingerprint subscriptions (only ~2%) are exempt.

Implementation: TCEQ will integrate the form into online systems. Until then, form must be signed manually, which could delay processing. Please be aware due to timing required by DPS and online integration timelines deficiency letters may be seen for this form until integration is complete.

Future Plans: TCEQ still prefers fingerprinting and plans to reintroduce it in future rulemaking.

### **TCEQ Annual Trade Fair**

**Dates:** June 3-4

**Location:** San Antonio (moved from Austin due to convention center renovations)

Note: Good opportunity for CE credits and industry updates.

### **TCEQ Hosted Resiliency Trainings**

Resiliency training options via webinar, but most will be in person this year and once approved will be publicized.

DWAAG members, will see these posted on that webpage.



Text notifications of these trainings will also be sent to subscribers once they're approved.

### **Resiliency and Ethics Training**

Resiliency: Required 2 CE hours post-winter storm legislation.

- New resiliency training sessions are being offered, with several more to be approved in 2025.
- Wastewater operators are not currently subject to resiliency requirements.

Ethics: Potential.

- A petition requested 4 hours of ethics training within the 30-hour renewal requirement.
- Commission approved exploration of rulemaking; no final decision yet.
- Stakeholder input will determine whether ethics becomes a required topic and how many hours are needed (e.g., 1 vs 4).

### **Receipts & Payment Confirmation**

Issue Raised: Municipal staff requested TCEQ receipts include last four digits of the credit card used.

Response: Due to data privacy and system separation, the licensing team only shows payment amount and date. Financial data is maintained by a separate section of TCEQ and cannot be shared or modified.

During the payment process an option is to take screenshots to turn in to your finance department that may meet their requirements.

### **Wastewater Licensing Clarification**

Question: Can individuals with only collection system experience qualify for a Class A Wastewater License?

Answer: No. At least 50% of the required experience must come from hands-on wastewater treatment plant experience. Collection system experience can only count toward the remaining half.

### **Training Team Update**

New Staff: Chance and Kenny joined the training team.

Project: Reviewed exam pass rates by question to improve test quality. SMEs will be consulted in the near future for input.

### **Adjournment**

Joseph McDaniel made a motion to adjourn, seconded by David Garza. Meeting adjourned.

### **Contacts:**

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