

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

WATER UTILITY OPERATOR LICENSING

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Date: July 14, 2025

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Location: Virtual Meeting through Microsoft Teams

Members Attending

Zachary Lillie, President
Angel Bustamante, Vice President
Adam Farguson
David Garza
Melissa Loyd
Joseph McDaniel
Wesley Nebgen
Raymond Perez

*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

Harrold Burris
Eduardo Montaña
Larry Bell
Cory Moose
Leanne Wilson

Visitors

Crystal Bowman
John Walden
Edward J Williams
Ben Hodges
David Van Riper
J. Horry
Karen Menard
Larry Goldberg
Leonard Leinfelder
Yolanda D Martin
Raymond Perez
Robb Starr
Gary L. Sober

TCEQ Staff Attending

Jaya Zyman, Occupational Licensing and Registration Division (OLRD)
Tamara Calhoun, OLRD
Teresa Etheredge, OLRD
John William Adams, OLRD
Chance Rushing, OLRD
Kenneth Smith, OLRD
Samantha Royall, OLRD
Madison Nickells, OLRD
Dana Lyons, OLRD
Sarah Ward, OLRD
Dania Grundmann, Water Quality Division (WQD)
Dorothy Young, Water Supply Division (WSD)
Leticia DeLeon, WSD

Jason Robinson, Small Business and Local Government (SBLG) Call to order:
The meeting was called to order by moderator Kenneth Smith.

Member Introductions:

No new members.

Quorum check – quorum present.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion to approve the meeting minutes from April 14th, 2025, was made by David Garza and seconded by Adam Farguson all members approved.

Water Supply Division (WSD) Updates: Dorothy Young

[Public Drinking Water Conference](#) - August 5-6, 2025, in Austin.

- Free conference
- Hybrid In-person/Virtual options
- Increased number of workshops.
- Registration currently open

Drought/Hurricane/Resiliency Workshops

- August 28, 2025 – Victoria, Tx. TCEQ assisted by TRWA
- Register on [TRWA's website](#)

Q&A Session

None.

Cybersecurity Updates and Requirements: Leticia DeLeon

Future Workshops Suggestions

Please notify Dorothy or Leticia of ideas for future workshop topics that would benefit your PWS.

Q&A Session

None

Water Quality Division (WQD) Updates: Dania Grundmann

Legislative Updates

This legislative session was very busy for wastewater permitting programs. Numerous bills were introduced that related to produced water, and compliance history as it relates to general permit eligibility and water quality issues.

Water Quality Advisory Groups

There are several surface water quality advisory groups that WUOLAC members and meeting attendees may be interested in. Additional information on all of these

available advisory work groups can be found online at www.tceq.texas.gov/agency/decisions/participation/advise/water_surface.html.

Upcoming WQD Meetings:

Water Quality Advisory Work Group – July 15, 2025

An open-participation work group that meets regularly (quarterly) to discuss issues related to water quality, wastewater permits, and wastewater standards.

- Live Webcast: www.tceq.texas.gov/agency/decisions/agendas/webcasts.html
- TCEQ YouTube page: www.youtube.com/user/TCEQNews

Please feel free to send an email to Outreach@tceq.texas.gov if you would like to join any of our water quality stakeholder groups, and please include the name of the stakeholder group that you would like to join in the email subject line. We will send out notifications about future stakeholder meetings to each designated stakeholder group's email distribution listserv, so please stay tuned for those notifications to be sent out.

Updates on WQD Rulemaking

30 TAC Chapter 217 – Wastewater Treatment Systems Design Criteria

We are currently working on revisions to the design criteria requirements for wastewater treatment systems in 30 TAC Chapter 217.

- The proposed revisions that our division-level engineers are currently working on include:
 - making changes to Subchapter C for collections system requirements, particularly expanding the section on reclaimed water distribution systems
 - updating the emergency power requirements for critical components of both the collection systems and the wastewater treatment facilities
 - adding new requirements for nutrient removal
 - moving Chapter 222, subchapter D for SADDs to Chapter 217 as new subchapter I, and repealing Chapter 222, subchapter D

Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness

In the interest of Homeland Security awareness and Critical Infrastructure emergency preparedness, TCEQ maintains records on all active Texas Land Application Permit (TLAP) and Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (TPDES) wastewater permitted sites. TCEQ collects information updates through our Water Quality Emergency Preparedness System (WQ EPS) portal in the State of Texas Environmental Electronic Reporting System (STEERS).

It is vital that you annually submit updated information concerning your wastewater treatment plant(s) and emergency contact(s) so that WQD has all of the necessary information to prepare for upcoming hurricane seasons and any other disaster events that may require TCEQ assistance with emergency response efforts.

If you currently have an active wastewater permit with TCEQ, please complete and submit the requested updates in the online WQ EPS portal in the STEERS system.

Occupational Licensing (OL) Updates: Jaya Zyman, & Tamara Calhoun

House Bill 1237 – License Renewal Extension

New Provision: Extends renewal period to 180 days (approximately six months).

Late renewals will incur additional fees (to be defined in rule)

- Regular renewal fee: \$111
- Up to 1-90 days late 1.5x the regular renewal fee
- 91-180 days late 2x the regular renewal fee

Continuing education must still be completed before license expiration.

Effective September 1, 2025, as a statutory change.

House Bill 5629 & Senate Bill 1818

Amends Licensing Process for Military, veterans and reciprocity for military spouses
Processes will be clarified in upcoming rule changes.

HB 5629 also requires waiver of all new license application fees for eligible military individuals.

Senate Bill 1080 – Criminal History & License Revocation

Amends license revocation rules for felony convictions:

Clarifies revocation is automatic only if directly related to the licensed profession.

Still allows discretionary revocation for any felony or revoked parole/probation.

Fingerprinting Requirement Upcoming Rule Change

Name-based checks are unreliable and do not allow communication of criminal history findings to applicants.

Fingerprinting increases the accuracy of the criminal history search results and allows TCEQ to discuss the applicant's criminal history with them.

Supported by statutory authority via newly passed legislation.

Ethics Training Petition

Requested by stakeholders in 2024 & commission found merit in request.

4 hours of ethics training required for water and wastewater operators.

To be included in upcoming proposed rule package.

Upcoming Rulemaking Process

Stakeholder Meeting September 9 at 10:00 AM (details will be posted on website).

- Open for Public Comment

Rulemaking Steps:

- Informal stakeholder feedback.
- Drafting of proposed rules.
- Presentation to Commission for permission to publish.
- 30-day public comment period.
- Rulemaking hearing and formal public comment period.

- Response to comments and potential revisions.
- Agenda and final adoption by Commission.
- Effective date follows adoption.

Key Points of Clarification

Statutory changes (like HB 1237, HB 5629, SB 1080) go into effect Sept 1, 2025, regardless of rulemaking status.

Rule changes (ethics training, fingerprinting, clarifications) must go through full process before becoming effective.

Next Steps:

- Monitor agency website for stakeholder meeting details.
- Prepare for formal comment opportunities during the rulemaking timeline.
- Implementation of new rules expected within a year or more from initial proposal.

TCEQ encourages license holders to give feedback and comment during this rulemaking process.

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.

DPS Acknowledgement Form

The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) now requires an Acknowledgement Form to be signed when submitting a self-attestation. Self-attestation is what license applicants currently do for the required criminal history section of the licensing application process. DPS now has their own form that also needs to be completed.

The DPS Acknowledgement Form requires:

- Full legal name (not a nickname or middle name)
- Signature

Incomplete or incorrect forms will require applicants to correct errors on submitted forms. Timely and accurate completion of the form is critical to avoid delays.

The form is now part of all TCEQ OL application methods; new/renewal, online/paper.

Volunteer Appreciation

Thank you to the WUOLAC volunteers for your assistance reviewing the newly drafted resiliency exam questions.

TCEQ Post-Training (end-of-course) Survey

Survey developed by TCEQ to gather student feedback regarding:

- Course quality including type and delivery method
- Instructor performance to foster overall instructional improvement and enhance the learning environment for students

- Training provider compliance with course requirements (e.g., use of approved manuals)

The survey will be distributed by TCEQ via email. Feedback will go directly to TCEQ, not to the training providers.

The initiative is intended to:

- improve training quality,
- support increased accountability
- assist prioritization of audits.
- identify issues remotely, especially due to limited staff availability for in-person audits.

Draft Survey Demonstration:

- yes/no questions.
- progress bar
- auto-submit upon completion
- number of questions (goal is 10-15 questions)

Request WUOLAC members review and provide feedback on drafted survey questions previously sent out.

Instructor Qualification Fee

The revision of RG-373 has been completed and is currently undergoing internal review. Once finalized and published, the new fee structure will go into effect.

- \$10 fee per course for independent instructor qualification reviews for previously approved courses
- No change in fees for applications for new courses. The instructor review is already included.
- Implementation begins once RG-373 revisions are published. An official notification will be sent once the revised RG is released.

Suggestion: Submit instructor qualification applications before the RG is finalized to avoid the fee.

This applies only if the instructor is currently qualified and the training provider is already approved for the course.

Licensing Statistics

Licensing Statistics for 3rd quarter of FY25 were sent out and no questions or concerns were raised.

- No major changes in exam trends were reported.
- Pass rates remain consistent with previous patterns.

It was noted two recent high school SETH programs administered provisional Class D water exams:

- One in San Antonio (in partnership with SAWS)
- One in Pflugerville

SETH Program Update

Students:

- Participated in multi-week training courses
- Submitted and were approved for applications
- Some applied for provisional licenses and took the exam

While pass rates were not high, the major success was moving most participants through the process up to the exam stage.

The course provider is now evaluating:

- Course structure
- Student feedback
- Instructor input

Encouragingly, a few students returned from last summer's pilot program to retake the exam or reapply.

While the current focus is on Class D water licenses, plans are underway to expand into wastewater training in the future. TCEQ is working with WEAT to develop a basic wastewater training course.

Local municipalities are collaborating with high schools.

Some graduates from the pilot programs have been hired by partnering cities.

Q&A Session

A question was raised regarding the possibility of offering oral exams in Spanish for Spanish-speaking applicants.

Clarification Provided:

- TCEQ offers written exams in both English and Spanish, with both versions displayed on the test.
- Oral exams are only available as a special accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)—for example, an individual with a diagnosed, and documented disability.
- Language barriers do not qualify as a disability under ADA.
- Oral exams (when approved) are administered only at TCEQ regional offices, not at computer-based testing centers.
- Currently, oral accommodations are provided only in English, and there are no known cases of oral exams being administered in Spanish.

TCEQ staff will need to further review ADA guidance if such a request arises in the future.

Adjourn

David Garza made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Adam Farguson. Meeting adjourned.

Contacts:

- Tamara Calhoun: Tamara.Calhoun@tceq.texas.gov
- Teresa Etheredge: Teresa.Etheredge@tceq.texas.gov
- Paul Munguia: Paul.Munguia@tceq.texas.gov
- Kenneth Smith: Kenneth.Smith@tceq.texas.gov

- Dorothy Young: Dorothy.Young@tceq.texas.gov
- Leticia DeLeon: Leticia.DeLeon@tceq.texas.gov
- Dania Grundmann: Dania.Grundmann@tceq.texas.gov
- Jason Robinson: Jason.Robinson@tceq.texas.gov
- TCEQ Licensing: Licenses@tceq.texas.gov
- TCEQ OL Training: OLtraining@tceq.texas.gov