



**Delaware River Basin Commission**

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**Steven J. Tambini, P.E.**  
Executive Director

**Minutes**  
**Water Quality Advisory Committee**

November 14, 2019

**Members & Alternates:**

**NYS DEC**

Not represented

**EPA**

Denise Hakowski  
Wayne Jackson (remotely)

**NJDEP**

Frank Klapinski

**Environmental**

Erik Silldorff

**Regulated Community Industrial**

Kimberly Long (Exelon)

**DNREC**

Not represented

**PADEP**

Tom Barron (remotely)

**Academia/Science**

John Jackson

**Local Watershed Organizations**

Not represented

**Regulated Community Municipal**

Jay Cruz (PWD)  
Bryan Lennon (Wilmington Public Works)

**National Park Service**

Rich Evans (remotely)

**Other Attendees:**

Steve Tambini (DRBC)  
John Yagecic (DRBC)  
Namsoo Suk (DRBC)  
Ron MacGillivray (DRBC)  
Elba Deck (DRBC)  
Li Zheng (DRBC)  
Elaine Panuccio (DRBC)  
Jake Bransky (DRBC)  
Helen Pang (NJDEP)  
Kristin Regan (EPA)  
Tom Amidon (DRBC)  
Kelly Somers (EPA, remotely)  
Kelly Anderson (PWD)  
Steve Seeberger (NJDEP)  
Irene Fitzgerald (DELCORA)  
Kody Hines (remotely)  
Andy Thuman (HDR, remotely)

Bill Brown (PADEP, remotely)  
Kristen Bowman Kavanagh (DRBC)  
Matthew Kundrat (PADEP, remotely)  
Don Hamilton (NPS, remotely)  
Greg Voigt (EPA, remotely)  
Kuo-Liang Lai (EPA, remotely)  
Branda Gotanda (Manko Gold Katcher & Fox)  
Meg McGuire (Delaware Currents)  
Eloise Gibby (Greeley and Hansen)  
Marzooq Alebus (NJDEP)  
Sheila Eyler (USFW, remotely)  
Eric Vowinkel (Rutgers University)  
Steve Jandoli (American Littoral Society)  
Michael Dillon (Manko Gold Katcher & Fox)  
Jean Malafronte (ANDRIS Consulting, remotely)  
Alice Baker (Penn Future, remotely)  
Andy Weber (remotely)  
Verna Harrison (remotely)

The meeting was called to order at approximately 1:35 PM by Frank Klapinski.

### **Meeting Minutes**

Draft minutes from the September 30, 2019 meeting had been previously provided to members for review. Erik Silldorff provided a minor revision.

John Jackson moved that the September 30, 2019 minutes be approved with revision, and Kimberly Long seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Approved minutes are posted on the DRBC web site at:

<https://www.nj.gov/drbc/library/documents/WQAC/093019/minutes.pdf>

### **Generic Capital Cost Estimates**

Under contract to DRBC, consulting firm Kleinfelder had completed Capital Cost Estimates for generic facilities for improved ammonia and total nitrogen effluent concentrations. The cost estimates were documented in a technical memorandum shared with the WQAC on October 25, 2019. John Yagecic pointed out that this was an interim work product, and that future phases of work would include O&M costs, facility-specific costs, and amortization of costs. This topic was presented via slides 4 and 5 of the slide set posted on the DRBC web site at:

<https://www.nj.gov/drbc/library/documents/WQAC/111419/updates.pdf>

### **Update on DO Early Action Workgroup meeting with DO Partnership**

John Yagecic reminded the group about the early action paragraph from Resolution 2017-4. Yagecic identified current participants in the DO Early Action Workgroup. On October 7, 2019, the DO Early Action Workgroup members participated in a meeting of the DO Partnership organized by PWD held at DELCORA. At the October 7 meeting, Early Action members discussed Resolution 2017-4, and asked Tier 1 facilities to consider what early actions could be taken to reduce discharge of ammonia and other oxygen depleting pollutants, especially during critical summer months, while other technical work to establish new estuary uses was ongoing. Early Action members asked to participate at a future meeting in approximately 6 months, to hear what early action were proposed. The group expressed interest in identifying grant or assistance opportunities for facility upgrades. Denise Hakowski mentioned that State Revolving Fund (SRF) low-cost loans had been applied for work in Camden. This topic was presented via slides 6 through 9 of the slide set posted on the DRBC web site at:

<https://www.nj.gov/drbc/library/documents/WQAC/111419/updates.pdf>

### **Recap of Nutrient Criteria Discussions from Previous Meeting**

John Yagecic provided the status of a non-DO nutrient endpoint report under preparation by the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University (ANSDU). Since the last meeting, comments on the draft report had been provided by Delaware Riverkeeper Network and Stroud Water Research Center, which DRBC provided to ANSDU. The comments generally focused on adding information on nutrient impacts to marshes and adding some higher-level synthesis similar to that performed for San Francisco Bay and other systems. Given that the comments would expand the scope of ANSDU's effort, DRBC indicated that they expected a 2<sup>nd</sup> draft report with a 2<sup>nd</sup> opportunity for stakeholder review and input, prior to development of a final report.

At the previous WQAC meeting, members requested that DRBC synthesize the discussion from the September 30<sup>th</sup> meeting to allow for additional deliberation. John Yagecic presented a synopsis of the previous discussion as understood by DRBC. From the previous meeting, the WQAC could potentially make recommendations regarding options for evaluation of nutrient criteria and recommendations regarding re-establishment of a nutrient criteria subcommittee. Yagecic indicated that recommendations for the nutrient criteria subcommittee might depend on what recommendations were made on evaluating nutrient criteria.

As indicated in DRBC's synthesis, recommendations on *when* to evaluate nutrient criteria could include:

- As part of the eutrophication model, consistent with DO endpoint (2017 draft plan)
- As part of the eutrophication model, if chlorophyll-a response is indicated
- After the revised DO criteria, after investigation by a reinstated nutrient criteria subcommittee (similar to the 2013 nutrient criteria plan)
- After some level of DO recovery, when other nutrient impacts are no longer masked by the DO sag
- The WQAC could withhold a recommendation until the expanded non-DO nutrient endpoint report is complete
- Some combination of the above options

Some attendees indicated they did not want to change course without a clearly defined water quality problem. Erik Silldorff indicated that the Chester USGS gage showed an algal signal in 2019. Some attendees thought it was too early to discuss another approach beyond the path set in the 2017-4 resolution. Several members suggested waiting until the model and the non-DO nutrient report were complete, so that they could inform decision making on how to approach nutrient criteria. Kim Long expressed concern about setting a limit that facilities could not meet. The group discussed timelines and how long it might take to develop nutrient criteria.

The group discussed the makeup of a possible re-established nutrient criteria subcommittee. Members asked if the subcommittee would draw from existing committee members or be composed of other experts not currently serving on the WQAC.

### **Quick Status Updates**

The group briefly discussed status of several ongoing projects and issues.

John Yagecic indicated that DRBC had completed a special monitoring study of bacterial parameters and would present results at a spring WQAC meeting. Jay Cruz indicated that PWD would also share its results in the future.

The group discussed the increasing chloride trend noted in the Delaware and many other freshwater rivers and streams. See slides 14 through 17 at:

<https://www.nj.gov/drbc/library/documents/WQAC/111419/updates.pdf>

John Jackson indicated that some ions under the broad category of salts are more toxic than others. The group discussed alternative road-salting strategies being tried in various places. There was general agreement that follow-up was needed.

Jake Bransky described microplastics monitoring work underway at DRBC. PWD is working on analytical methods. EPA ORD is also developing methods for microplastics in sediment.

**Adjournment**

Jay Cruz moved to adjourn and Kimberly Long seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at approximately 3:30 PM.