



Water Quality Council May 12, 2025, 1:00 PM TMACOG Grand Lobby

Attendance:

Dennis Kennedy, Randy Mahlman, Ben Pushka, Mike Libben, Tom Stalter, Nick Komives, Kevin Laughlin, Mike Hill, Brittney Klockowski, Zuri Carter, Joe Cappel, Garrett Chamberlain,

Partners and guests: Edith Kippenhan, Sally Gladwell, Kris Barnswell, John Hull, Kris Patterson, Sara Guiher, Clark Hutson, Katherine Behrens, Apurva Lad, Andrew Fribley, Emily Kelly, Christina Kuchle, Emily Matthew

TMACOG Staff: Kari Gerwin, Melissa Hopfer, Tiara Davis, Ann Nair, Kingsley Kanjin,

Welcome:

Kevin Laughlin, Chair, City of Northwood, welcomed everyone to the meeting, and asked for round table introductions.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:

Kevin Laughlin asked if quorum was established. It was not, so he tabled the meeting minutes approval.

Engaging Communities, Protecting Health: How You Can Help the Great Lakes Aerosol Monitoring Research (GLAMR) Community Health Study

Kevin Laughlin introduced Katherine Behrens and Apurva Lad, PhD, UTMC. Apurva Lad gave a background on UTMC's Great Lakes Aerosol Monitoring Research (GLAMR) the Community Health Study. Great Lakes Aerosol Monitoring Research focuses on the impacts of aerosolized algal toxins on human health. The research will be used to develop diagnostic measures. Patients/Participants can be anyone living or recreating within a mile of Lake Erie who is 10 years old or older. This will be a 5-year study and participants will meet with researchers 3 times a year. Participants will have blood work, nasal swaps, breath tests and are asked to keep a diary of activity. Attendees were asked to share this information with their communities. Q&A followed.

Ohio Impacts of Federal Funding Cuts

Kevin Laughlin gave a brief bio on Emily Kelly, Ohio Environmental Council. Emily Kelly then stated that OEC's mission is to protect the environment and health of all Ohio Communities through legal and policy advocacy, decision-maker accountability, and civic engagement.

She then addressed the cuts to funding that are happening at the Federal level. The USEPA funding is going from \$9.1 to \$4.2 billion. This is the USEPA's smallest budget since 1986. The cuts include a 91% reduction to categorical grants, impacting or eliminating Sec 106 Clean Water State Grants, Section 319 Grants, and Public Water System Supervision grants. This is at a time when water infrastructure needs increased investment and will also impact Federal workers, agencies, scientists, government groups, water professionals and non-profits that implement federal programs. USEPA is holding virtual listening sessions on May 14th for the public. NOAA impacts – forecasts due to termination of climate research data and funding. 500 staff fired, \$209 million cut research paused – reduction in data collection.

State Revolving Fund will see 89% reduction in funding, with an estimated \$103 million in cut for Ohio. The SRF was not supposed to be federally funded in the long term, but this change is too rapid to absorb the cost for the change. 23 Ohio programs have been cut. In Congressional District 9 – \$1.1 million this affects UT, GLCAP, Fair Housing, ABLE, TMA. Ms. Kelly also noted that the Ohio House has proposed a 45% cut to H2Ohio.

Ohio Environmental Council actions include engaging in meetings with congressional members, media outreach, Wetlands Protection plan, PFAS plan.

Roundtable – Local impacts of cuts to water quality funding

Northwood – Uncertainty around current GRLI Grants. Should be safe but have to take out words like environmental justice or sustainability. Could change day by day.

Weston – Need funding for stormwater. Suggestion that work could be tied to streets funding SRF shift to state-funded – 5 years they have known this would be changing, but no guidelines or plans in place for the transition.

What can TMACOG do to help with that situation? Email Kari if you have ideas.

Edith Kippenhan suggested template letter to share with neighbors and friends to send to the state and federal representatives – Melissa Hopfer has been working on this.

208 Plan Update

Melissa Hopfer, TMACOG, gave background on what 208 plan is. She then discussed the updates that have been made in the last year. Discussed the addition of the drinking water chapter. She then talked about FY26 planning including prescriptions, wastewater and non-point source updates, outline data analysis for HSTS and Stormwater chapters, drinking water services area boundaries. She also discussed the current timeline.

Staff Report

Kari Gerwin, TMACOG, Manure management follow-up – Lake Erie Waterkeeper – ODA and OEPA outreach about Schmucker Farms. Mike Libben reached out to ODA. State agencies appear to be doing everything they can within their authority to address the issue. TMACOG will look at policy gaps and encourage change. Regulatory action is needed.

WLEB advisory group – robust discussion ideas for what we should work on this year. Soil Health, Homeowner HSTS education, partnering with SWC and LESH.

CWR advisory group – 208 plan discussions, weather event analysis, member feedback, HSTS mapping with goal to develop a single 5 county HSTS map.

SWC – LESH website – get involved page, calendar of events – committees can add so all events are in one place. Tiara Davis, TMACOG, presented on LESH at Ohio SW Conference, refocus efforts to plan for FY26 training event, early stakeholder outreach on MS4 permit.

Member Updates

Brittney Klockowski – Ground water in Luckey any updates? Kris Barnswell said to reach out to Amy Klei at OEPA and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Public Comments

None

Adjourn

Kevin Laughlin adjourned the meeting at 2:33 pm