# Climate Ready Water Utilities Working Group

## Meeting #5 Summary (DRAFT)

*September 23 & 24, 2010*

The following is a recap of the fifth and final meeting of the Climate Ready Water Utilities (CRWU) Working Group. The meeting took place in Alexandria, Virginia on September 23 & 24, 2010. The substance of the Working Group's discussions is captured in the final Working Group Report. All meeting materials are available on the CRWU public website at: http://water.epa.gov/aboutow/ogwdw/ndwac/climatechange/index.cfm.

## Welcome, Overview, and Introductions

- Veronica Blette, standing in for Lauren Wisniewski, EPA's Designated Federal Official for this process, opened the meeting.
- Paul Fleming and Olga Morales, Working Group Co-Chairs, and Rob Greenwood, Lead Facilitator, provided an overview of the meeting agenda and objectives.
- Ms. Morales and Jeff Cooley, Working Group National Drinking Water Advisory Council (NDWAC) members, indicated that the NDWAC Council was very pleased with the CRWU Working Group's work to-date, and is looking forward to receiving the full report for discussion at the December NDWAC meeting.
- Working Group members agreed to give Rick Holmes, Pat Mulroy's alternate, proxy rights due to his active participation in the process.
- Peter S. Silva, EPA Office of Water Assistant Administrator and Nancy Stoner, Office of Water Deputy Assistant Administrator, provided opening remarks followed by discussion with the audience.

## Presentations

All presentations at this meeting were designed to update Working Group members on related activities at the federal level. The presentations were not intended to inform Working Group discussions.

Sheila O'Brien – National Climate Assessment Coordinator

Ms. O'Brien provided an overview of the National Climate Assessment (NCA). The next report, mandated by law, is due in 2013 and will examine options for adaptation and mitigation, as well as lay the groundwork for a more ongoing assessment process. The 2013 report will focus on new topics not covered in the previous two assessments, including cross-sector issues (e.g. the intersection of water and energy) and a stronger communication and education component. Staff from the NCA is also talking with different federal agencies about developing indicators (to be defined) of climate change that would be monitored on a long-term basis. The NCA will also engage a network of partners and stakeholders around technical support. There will be a NOAA-sponsored Federal Advisory Committee (FACA) with subcommittees under it conducting the actual assessment, which will be reviewed by the National Research Council. Anyone interested in participating in the FACA and/or assessment process should contact Ms. O'Brien. The draft outline was posted on the Federal Registrar in September, and comments are welcome. To-date the process has included strategic planning and regional workshops, establishment of a task force, development of a draft strategic plan, and approval for the FACA. The goal is to have a draft report by 2012, leaving a year for review and finalization.
For more information see: http://www.globalchange.gov/what-we-do/assessment.

John Whitler – Environmental Protection Specialist, EPA Office of Water

Mr. Whitler updated the Working Group on newly developed Office of Water tools of relevance to water utilities. The Climate Ready Water Utility Toolbox is a one-stop shop for climate resources, containing

links to approximately 350 external sources. The first version is a beta version and EPA is planning on adding details to the website to make that apparent. EPA welcomes feedback on the site, as well as suggestions for how to integrate it with other similar efforts. In the meantime, EPA will continue to add resources (125 are slated to be added in next couple of months), as well as fix a few issues with the initial design (e.g. searches that do not turn up any results).
Access the CRWU Toolbox here: http://www.epa.gov/safewater/watersecurity/climate/toolbox.html.

Mr. Whitler also mentioned the CREAT Tool, which Working Group members received a more in-depth briefing on at their July meeting. This self-assessment tool was tested through two pilots with East Bay Municipal Utility District and New York City (NYC) Department of Environmental Protection, and is planned for release in fall of 2010. EPA will conduct demonstrations and trainings after the tool is released. Three are already plans in place to revise and update the tool to make it easier to use and more appealing for small and medium sized utilities. Working Group member Jeff Cooley, who participated in the NYC pilot, said that he thinks utilities of his size could get through the process, however there is a lot of information so it would be good to get buy-in from decision makers prior to undertaking it.
Access the CREAT Tool here: http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/watersecurity/climate/creat.cfm.

Lastly Mr. Whitler talked about the Tabletop Exercise Tool for Water Systems: Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Resiliency, which was also discussed more in-depth at the Working Group's July meeting. The goal of the climate change section of the tool, released in June 2010, is to help utilities become aware of potential climate change impacts and integrate climate change adaptation strategies into their planning and operations.

Karen Metchis – Climate Advisor, EPA Office of Water

Ms. Metchis discussed the White House Council on Environmental Quality Climate Change Adaptation Task Force (the Task Force) and updating of the EPA Office of Water National Water Program Strategy. The Task Force was established about a year ago and plans to deliver final recommendations to President Obama by October 2010. There are twelve workgroups, including one focusing on water, and all workgroup findings were combined into one full report. Eight of the workgroups also produced their own reports, and are going through the process of getting those approved. The full report is pared down to three recommendations, with water being one of the key areas covered. Ms. Metchis noted that she expects the water workgroup to continue after the final report is released, because climate change is one thing that brings all of the federal agencies enthusiastically together in a coordinated work environment. Along with organization and planning, the second main focus area of the report is implementation, including updating and improving existing data and modernizing statistical methods, education and outreach, and mainstreaming climate change so that is a part of other programs rather than a separate activity. EPA just finalized a separate report (posted here: http://water.epa.gov/scitech/climatechange/) looking at how eight water utilities do vulnerability assessments. These findings show that all utilities conduct assessments differently, and that the climate science translation piece from scientists to water managers is missing. A self-generated federal agency group, including the Bureau of Reclamation, USACE, NOAA, USGS, and FEMA, formed to begin tackling the translation issue and has published a couple of reports on the subject.

The Office of Water is working on updating their National Water Program Strategy, focusing on a longer-term vision – where do they want to get, what are the building blocks to get there, and what is the broader context. The CRWU Report could be used in the development of the Water Program Strategy. The Office of Water is also talking with other EPA offices (e.g. OAR and ORD) on how to take a system-wide, cross-media approach. The goal is to have a draft report out for comment by next summer and a final report out by October 2011. The Office of Water will consider convening a conference call with interested members of the CRWU Working Group to discuss ideas for inclusion in the Water Program Strategy. There is also a

state-tribal climate council providing input into development of the Water Program Strategy, and a call/meeting with water utility associations is in the works.

## Meeting Discussions

The majority of the meeting focused on final changes to the draft CRWU Report to the NDWAC and consensus building. On the first day, the Working Group discussed a comprehensive set of detailed comments provided by Working Group members during their review of the updated report prior to the meeting. All substantive comments were walked through one-by-one with further discussion and refinement occurring on Day 2, based on Day 1 discussions and overnight work by the facilitation team. All final decisions will be incorporated into the final CRWU Report, which will in turn be distributed to the Working Group for one last fatal flaw review prior to the delivery to the NDWAC.

In addition to final modifications to the report, on the second day, Working Group members discussed how to handle individual Working Group comments. The Working Group determined individual comments should be limited to comments about process only. As this was a modification to the Working Group's Charter, the facilitation team conducted a round-robin consensus check with Working Group members regarding the modification. All 17 Working Group members present agreed to the Charter modification. Working Group members also discussed the Co-Chairs memo and agreed it should be transmittal in nature.

After all final changes were agreed to on the second day, the facilitation team conducted one last round-robin consensus check with Working Group members asking each member if they had any additional changes or fatal flaws. This check resulted in full consensus on the final CRWU Report with one suggested change (the addition back into the report of a deletion agreed to the first day) that all members supported. After the meeting, the facilitation team checked-in with the two Working Group members not present at the meeting (Mr. Rangarajan and Ms. St. Martin) to ensure they were aware of and agreed with all final changes. They did, resulting in full Working Group consensus for the final CRWU Report.

## Next Steps

- Prepare the meeting summary and incorporate meeting decisions into the final CRWU Report. Distribute the final report to the Working Group for fatal flaw review.
- Draft a transmittal memo, distribute to the Working Group for review, and incorporate final changes.
- Deliver the final Working Group report to the NDWAC (anticipated to occur in mid-October).
- The Working Group NDWAC members, Ms. Morales and Mr. Cooley, will present the final CRWU Report at the NDWAC meeting December, 8-10 in Washington, D.C. All Working Group members are invited to attend the meeting. The NDWAC Council will discuss the report and either accept the report as-is, reject the report, or determine revisions are needed. If/once accepted, the NDWAC Co-Chairs will deliver the final version to the EPA Administrator's Office where it will likely be reviewed and then turned over to the EPA Office of Water for response to the NDWAC and implementation.
- Develop talking points/ a presentation for Working Group members to use in communications about the final report.

## Public Comments and Closing

- There was no public comment.
- The Working Group Co-Chairs conducted a process debrief with the Working Group. The facilitation team left the room for this portion of the meeting, therefore no notes were recorded.
- The Co-Chairs provided closing remarks and Ms. Blette, adjourned the meeting at Noon Eastern Time.

## Attendees

| Working Group Members | | Federal Partners |
|---|---|---|
| Matt Appelbaum | Tony Quintanilla | Geoffrey Bonnin, NOAA |
| Katherine Baer | Steve Schmitt | Joan Brunkard, CDC |
| Jeff Cooley | Marcia St. Martin** | Sheila Frace, EPA |
| George Crombie | Michael Wallis | Juliette Hayes, FEMA |
| Pat Davis | Rebecca Weidman | Marty Savoie, USACE |
| Paul Fleming | Rebecca West | David Travers, EPA |
| Cindy Forbes | Paul Whittemore | Paul Wagner, USACE |
| Gregory McKnight | Doug Yoder | |
| Olga Morales-Sanchez | | |
| Pat Mulroy* | | |

*Richard Holmes, Ms. Mulroy's alternate, was present.
**Bob Miller, Ms. St. Martin's alternate, was present.