

# **Water Use Advisory Council (WUAC) Meeting**

Hosted by the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)

**Tuesday, December 9, 2025**

**1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

Lee Walker Conference Room, Debroah A. Stabenow Building, (Formerly Constitution Hall)  
525 West Allegan, Lansing, MI 48933

Remote Option Available Via Teams

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

**Or call in (audio only)**

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**Phone Conference ID: 565 559 15#**

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **1. Welcome – Laura**

Laura Campbell (Michigan Farm Bureau) called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and noted that she was participating remotely and thanked members and guests for joining both in person and virtually. EGLE staff initiated the meeting recording and transcription.

It was noted that an in-person quorum was not present. As a result, formal action items requiring quorum, including approval of prior meeting minutes and approval of the agenda, were deferred. The Council proceeded with discussion and informational updates consistent with prior practice when quorum is not present.

### **2. Roll Call**

Laura Campbell facilitated roll call.

#### **WUAC Members/Alternates Present at Stabenow Building**

Bryan Burroughs (Trout Unlimited)

Dave Hamilton (TNC – Retired)

Pat Staskiewicz (AWWA)

Megan Napier (AKT Peerless)

Sara Pearson (MGS)

Rex Vaughn (alternate)

Doug Needham (Michigan Aggregates Association)

Megan Tinsley (MEC)

#### **WUAC Members/Alternates Participating Virtually**

Laura Campbell (MI Farm Bureau, Co-Chair)

Frank Ettawageshik (United Tribes of MI)

Michael Frederick (Michigan Water Well Association)

Katie Lindstrom (Barr Engineering)

Rachel Proctor (Consumers Energy)

## **Non-members Present**

### **EGLE Staff**

Juneal Black (EGLE) (in person)  
Jim Milne (EGLE) (in person)  
Mike Jugle (EGLE) (in person)  
Andrew LeBaron (EGLE) (in person)  
Garrett Link (EGLE) (virtual)  
Katie Mika (EGLE) (virtual)  
Sydney Ruhala (EGLE) (in person)  
Megan Cameron (EGLE) (in person)  
Jill Van Dyke (EGLE) (virtual)  
Emily Finnell (EGLE-OGL) (in person)  
Ashley Reibel (EGLE) (in person)  
Hannah Arnett (EGLE) (in person)  
Travis Boeskool (EGLE) (in person)

### **Guests and Other Participants**

Joanne Wisely (virtual)  
Todd Feenstra (virtual; Tritium Inc.)  
Joel Henry (virtual; HDR Inc.)  
Alyssa Fabia (Freshwater) (virtual)  
Khalid Omar (virtual; MGS)  
Maria Swearingen (virtual)  
Ralph Haefner (virtual)

### **3. Approval of Minutes-Roll Call Vote Discussion**

Ms. Campbell invited participants to propose any edits or amendments to the minutes from the previous meeting for discussion and documentation. No amendments were proposed. The Council noted that formal approval of the prior meeting minutes will occur at the next meeting when an in-person quorum is present.

### **4. Approval of Agenda-Roll Call Vote Discussion**

No additions or changes to the agenda were proposed. Formal approval was deferred due to the absence of an in-person quorum.

### **5. Public Comment (Three Minute Limit)**

No public comments were offered, either in person or virtually. The public comment period was closed.

### **6. Groundwater Governance in EPA Region 5 – Freshwater – Alyssa Fabia**

Alyssa Fabia (Freshwater) delivered a presentation on groundwater governance across EPA Region 5, summarizing a multi-year, multi-state project examining groundwater governance frameworks, data gaps, and institutional challenges across Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Minnesota. The project was funded by the Joyce Foundation and emphasized a tribal-first engagement approach, beginning with direct collaboration with tribal governments before broader stakeholder engagement.

Ms. Fabia described the project's two phases: an initial assessment and mapping of existing groundwater governance structures and hydrogeologic knowledge, followed by hands-on regional workshops focused on areas with complex geology, governance challenges, and tribal interests. She highlighted key findings, including limited groundwater-specific governance frameworks, significant data gaps (particularly related to monitoring wells and subsurface mapping), and widespread public reliance on groundwater without corresponding awareness or engagement.

Discussion emphasized the distinction between groundwater governance and management, the importance of inclusive stakeholder engagement to reduce conflict and litigation risk, and the challenges of fragmented authority across local, state, tribal, and federal jurisdictions. Ms. Fabia noted that no single "model" approach exists for groundwater governance due to geologic and institutional variability, and that solutions must be tailored regionally.

Council members and participants engaged in discussion regarding funding sources, applicability of regional governance frameworks, the role of local ordinances, and existing Michigan mechanisms for tribal-state coordination. EGLE staff and Council members shared perspectives on Michigan's current regulatory structure, geologic complexity, and stakeholder engagement efforts.

Ms. Campbell thanked Ms. Fabia for her presentation and participation.

## **7. EGLE Update**

EGLE provided a budget process overview led by Travis Boeskool, Senior Deputy Director for Finance and Administration. Mr. Boeskool described the Executive Branch budget development timeline, including internal agency proposal development beginning in late summer, submission to the State Budget Office in mid-October, and release of the Governor's Executive Budget Recommendation in January.

He explained how agency priorities are vetted internally and externally, the confidentiality of executive budget deliberations, and the shift in agency roles once the Governor's budget is released. Discussion highlighted the timing challenges between WUAC biennial recommendations and the state budget cycle, as well as opportunities for earlier engagement, legislative advocacy, and clearer communication of Council priorities.

Council members discussed strategies for improving visibility of WUAC recommendations, including earlier reporting timelines, concise summary materials, legislative briefings, and targeted outreach to appropriations committees and executive budget staff.

### **a. WWAT Tool Update – Lena/Adam**

EGLE staff provided an update on the Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool, covering approximately the first 80 days of implementation of the updated tool. Staff summarized registration activity to date and described technical refinements made in collaboration with USGS and contractors.

EGLE explained that early analysis identified a conversion issue in the updated code that resulted in over-prediction of streamflow depletion in some cases. The issue was corrected, and revised results now align closely with legacy model outputs. Staff

emphasized that the update improves accuracy while maintaining continuity with prior assessments.

**b. Water Use Assessment Unit Update – Jim**

James Milne provided an update on activities within the Water Use Assessment Unit (WUAU). He reported ongoing program operations related to water withdrawal registrations, site-specific reviews, and permit coordination under Part 327. Staff continue to process registrations and reviews in accordance with statutory timelines while balancing increased workload and system transitions associated with the Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool modernization.

Mr. Milne noted that the Unit is closely coordinating with EGLE technical staff, USGS, and external contractors, to ensure consistency between legacy assessments and updated modeling outputs. Emphasis was placed on maintaining transparency and predictability for registrants while technical refinements to assessment tools are implemented. Staff are monitoring early results from the updated tool to identify trends, resolve anomalies, and ensure alignment with established program expectations.

Additional discussion referenced continued coordination with other EGLE divisions and the Office of the Great Lakes to support Compact-related reviews, data needs, and cumulative impact considerations. No policy decisions or Council actions were requested as part of this update.

**8. Great Lakes Compact Council Updates – Emily**

Emily Finnell, Office of the Great Lakes (OGL), provided an update on recent Great Lakes–St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact activities. She noted that the Compact Council and Great Lakes Regional Body continue to coordinate on prior notice and exception review processes and inter-jurisdictional consultation requirements.

Ms. Finnell referenced ongoing coordination related to consumptive use proposals that trigger prior notice under the Compact and emphasized the importance of timely state review and comment consistency with the Compact’s Standard of Review and Decision-Making. She reiterated that the Compact Council serves as a forum for information sharing and coordination among the Great Lakes states, while final decision-making authority rests with the host jurisdiction.

Additional discussion highlighted continued collaboration between OGL, EGLE divisions, and partner agencies to ensure Michigan’s input reflects both technical review and policy considerations. No action items or decisions were requested from the Council as part of this update.

**9. Committee Chairs Report - Bryan**

**a. Conservation and Efficiency Committee**

Emily Finnell reported on behalf of the Conservation and Efficiency Committee, noting that the committee continues to focus on advancing implementation of water conservation and efficiency initiatives consistent with prior WUAC recommendations. Ongoing efforts include coordination with EGLE staff and external partners to track

progress on funded projects and evaluate opportunities to inform future Council recommendations. No action items were brought forward for Council consideration.

**b. Data Collection Committee**

The committee remains engaged with EGLE and federal partners on data integration efforts and long-term monitoring needs. Discussion emphasized the importance of reliable data to support modeling, site-specific review, and cumulative impact assessment. No decisions or recommendations were requested.

**c. Models Committee**

• **Michigan Hydrologic Framework Update – MSU and USGS**

Representatives from Michigan State University (MSU) and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) provided an update on the Michigan Hydrologic Framework initiative. The presenters described the effort as a collaborative project intended to improve statewide hydrologic consistency by integrating surface water and groundwater datasets into a unified framework that can support modeling, water use assessment, and resource management.

The update highlighted ongoing work to align existing hydrologic data sources, improve spatial resolution, and address gaps related to groundwater–surface water interaction. The framework is intended to support a range of applications, including enhancement of modeling tools used by EGLE, improved interpretation of site-specific review results, and broader planning efforts related to cumulative impacts and long-term water resource sustainability.

MSU and USGS noted that the work builds upon existing monitoring networks, stream gage data, geologic mapping, and groundwater studies, and is being coordinated with EGLE initiatives such as the Hydrologic Enhancement for Michigan (HEMI) program. Emphasis was placed on developing a scalable and adaptable framework that can evolve as new data become available.

Council members asked clarifying questions regarding how the framework may ultimately interface with regulatory tools and decision-making processes. The presenters emphasized that the effort remains in a development and integration phase and is intended to complement — not replace — existing assessment tools.

**d. Implementation Committee**

Efforts remain focused on supporting EGLE implementation activities, monitoring project timelines, and identifying barriers to implementation where additional coordination or clarification may be needed. No new recommendations were advanced at this time.

**10. Future – Pat**

Pat Staskiewicz reviewed upcoming meeting dates for 2026, noting that several meetings are designated as quorum critical. Members were encouraged to plan attendance accordingly.

**a. 2025 Meeting Dates (at Con Hall unless others offer to host) (\*Quorum critical meetings)**

- December 9

**b. 2026 Meeting Dates**

- February 10
- April 14
- June 9
- \*August 11
- \*September 8
- \*October 13
- \*November 10
- December 8 (tentative)

**c. Formats**

**d. Quorum**

**11. Open Comments (Three Minute Limit)**

Mr. Staskiewicz opened the second public comment period for general water-related topics. No public comments were offered.

**12. Motion to Adjourn**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:01 p.m.