

**MINUTES
223rd Meeting of the Technical Committee
Virtual Meeting
June 10, 2020**

Chairman Bruno Pigott, Presiding

Call to Order

The 223rd meeting of the ORSANCO Technical Committee was called to order by Chairman Pigott at 8:00 A.M. on Wednesday, June 10, 2020. Six states, three federal agencies, and five Commission advisory committees were represented (for Roster of Attendance see on page 7). Chairman Pigott welcomed all to ORSANCO's first virtually-held meeting of the Technical Committee which has resulted from public health and safety issues surrounding COVID-19.

Minutes of 222nd Committee Meeting

ACTION: Motion passed to accept the minutes of the 222nd Technical Committee meeting.

Chief Engineer's Report

Director Harrison reported that ORSANCO staff will be following a draft Harmful Algae Bloom Response and Communications plan this summer should an Ohio River HABs event occur. The draft plan has been reviewed by ORSANCO's HABs Work Group and will be placed on the October TEC meeting agenda for endorsement. However, any input on the plan prior to October are certainly welcome. He reported that ORSANCO is chairing an abundant clean water section of the Ohio River Basin Strategic Plan, a joint effort with the Army Corps of Engineers, the Ohio River Basin Alliance, and other partners. A draft of the strategic plan is expected to be reviewed by the Commission at its October, 2020 meetings. Director Harrison then provided an update on the Commission's budget. The FY21 budget is balanced, however the 5-year projection shows that the budget has shortfalls in the fifth year and further out. Funding from state grants and the USEPA's National Rivers and Streams Assessment have significantly helped the budget outlook, however staff will continue to seek long-term funding opportunities.

Status of ORSANCO's Monitoring Programs Resulting from the COVID-19 Shutdown

Staff reported that the Bimonthly and Clean metals programs intend to continue sampling a reduced number of the 29 stations, focusing on main stem sites that can be reached with day-trips and sampled with one staff member. Additional tributary sites will be incorporated as resources allow. Routine biological surveys require multi-person crews and overnight travel for efficient completion. Deadline dates were provided for when these activities would need to be allowed in order for routine surveys to be completed. These dates were provided for macroinvertebrate, electrofishing, and fish tissue collection, which had latest start dates of September 1st, October 5th, and Nov 1st respectively. Additional special surveys for state and federal agencies may also be compromised if social distancing restrictions continue.

Staff provided a status report on all of its current and planned monitoring programs resulting from the COVID-19 shutdown, including: Bimonthly/clean metals sampling, contact recreation bacteria monitoring, HABs continuous monitoring network, biological pool surveys, fish tissue contaminants, and the Ohio River PFAS ambient survey which is currently still in the planning phase. Staff has developed sampling guidelines for the protection of staff and to minimize the potential spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. In general, all field sampling activities conducted

since March have been limited to those activities that could be completed as a day trip by a one-person field crew.

2020 Biennial Assessment of Ohio River Water Quality Conditions

Staff presented a timeline covering the generation and review of the information contained within the 305b Report. The use assessment methodologies and resulting assessments of the 2014-2018 abiotic and biotic data were reviewed and agreed upon during a 305b workgroup meeting in December of 2019 and subsequently approved by TEC at the February meeting. The final assessment and pertinent data sets were summarized in a draft report that was reviewed by workgroup members in April of 2020. These comments were incorporated by staff and resulted in the final draft presented to the Technical Committee in May 2020. Staff provided a brief overview of the methodologies, final assessments results, format changes relative to past reports (e.g. moving report elements online), and items for consideration prior to the next biennial report (e.g. development of a Harmful Algal Bloom assessment methodology). Staff thanked members of the 305b workgroup for their diligence reviewing the report under these abnormal circumstances; their efforts resulted in a more concise and complete product. The final assessments and report were endorsed by ORSANCO's Technical Committee.

ACTION: Motion passed to endorse the draft 305b report, *Biennial Assessment of Ohio River Water Quality Conditions, 2020*.

Mercury Mass Balance Project

Staff provided a summary of recent activities on the mercury project/report. A draft report was distributed to TEC at the February, 2020 meeting with a six week comment period. Staff received hundreds of comments, revised the report, and had a second comment period in which many more comments were received. Those comments have also been incorporated into the report as appropriate into the current draft. The Ad Hoc Committee on Mercury Studies will be recommending approval of the report to the Commission at its meeting. Staff then presented the project objectives and report conclusions, as follows:

- Mercury point source loads cumulatively upstream of Ohio River mile (ORM) 912 total approximately 2% of the instream mercury load at 912.
- Mercury atmospheric deposition loads cumulatively upstream of ORM 912 are estimated to be approximately six times greater than the instream mercury load at ORM 912.
- Instream mercury loads and yields were estimated for the 15 major tributaries. Tributary loads upstream of ORM 912 cumulatively total approximately half of the instream mercury load at ORM 912.
- Point source loads from direct discharges of mercury to the Ohio River total approximately 40% of the point source loads in the basin.
- Instream mercury project data relates very well to long term instream mercury data.

ACTION: Motion passed to endorse the draft report, *Ohio River Basin Mercury Loading Analysis*.

Ohio River PFAS Study

An update was provided to the Technical Committee on efforts to develop a PFAS monitoring project to characterize ambient levels of PFAS compounds in the Ohio River. Staff has been working, with guidance from the PFAS Work Group, to develop a sampling plan and a Quality Assurance Program Plan (QAPP) to detail the specifics of the project. The first round of sampling is tentatively scheduled to be completed this fall. A second round would then be conducted in the spring 2021. Staff is working with our federal partners on analytical services (USEPA) and sample collection methodology (USGS). The USGS is in the process of evaluating its cross-sectional sampling EDI (Equal Discharge Increment) methodology relative to PFAS compounds based on a quality assurance study they are conducting in conjunction with a large water quality survey completed in Pennsylvania. Likewise, the USEPA is working to validate a new analytical method for PFAS analysis for surface waters samples. ORSANCO staff are awaiting results from both of these efforts before finalizing the sampling plan and initiating PFAS monitoring on the Ohio River.

Member Updates and Interstate Water Quality Issues

Illinois

Scott Twait reported that most Illinois EPA employees are currently working from home at this time. Their analytical lab is currently closed and field work has been temporarily suspended. However, the office will be moving back towards more normal operations. The state's PFAS monitoring program will be initially focusing on finished drinking water and they are working on criteria development. The state is also taking a watershed approach to issuing variances for chlorides resulting from deicing activities.

Indiana

Eileen Hack reported on IDEM's monitoring and assessment staff field protocols relative to COVID. Masks, frequent hand washing, and sanitizing surfaces. Field staff must answer screening questions. No more than two persons are allowed per vehicle, one in front and one in back, and they are to be a sampling team for the summer. There will be no operations requiring overnight stays or boat sampling prior to August.

The Duke Energy Gallagher plant permit is in-house for renewal, and their last two operating units are scheduled to cease operating in 2022. 316A evaluations are ongoing for the Clifty Creek and ALCOA Warrick facilities, while the Gallagher facility is undergoing a 316B evaluation.

They have completed a fourth probabilistic assessment cycle for Ohio River tributaries, and fish tissue will be completed later this year. The state has approved Citizen Energy's use attainability analysis regarding a CSO wet weather limited use, however this needs final approval from USEPA Region 5 before being final. Martha Clark-Mettler added that they will be asking drinking water utilities to collect PFAS samples that will be analyzed by the state as part of their long-range plan. Sampling reference sites this season has been cancelled due to COVID. Commissioner Pigott added that the department has been asked to hold back fifteen percent of its budget due to COVID impacts.

Kentucky

Katie McCone reported that most of KDOW is working from home. While monitoring activities have been curbed due to COVID, they have prioritized reference reach long-term trends and ambient water quality monitoring sites. Only one field staff is allowed per vehicle and no boat work is occurring at this time. The DOW is developing a vision for public water system sustainability. They are developing a Phase 2 study for the PFAS survey work. They are updating their Nutrient Reduction Strategy and the Agriculture Water Quality Plan Producer Workbook. Their 2018 triennial review has been completed. They are working on a pilot project to monitor for flood conditions in reservoirs. They are in the process of completing activities for their 2018-2020 water quality assessments for the integrated report to Congress. They will be holding a training webinar for industry representatives from the construction, materials and manufacturing sector. And finally, they are developing protocols, inspection profiles, and training materials for their new flood plain inspections.

New York

Commissioner Conroe reported that NYDEC staff are generally working remotely. The fisheries division will be conducting field activities this season. New York has resumed its watercraft steward program which addresses the introduction of invasive species from boats. In addition, the statewide lakes assessment program has resumed.

Ohio

Audrey Rush reported that OEPA has completed its QAPP for this field season. They are planning a scaled-down survey of large rivers to include 120+ sites, including those on the Muskingum, Hocking, Little Miami, and Great Miami rivers, as well as Raccoon Creek. They are currently working on SOPs for safe sampling. Their modelling and assessment group is considering how to use ORSANCO's data for the 2022 Integrated Report. They are working on a general permit that is applicable to non-navigable ephemeral streams. They have initiated a public review of their variance rule, are updating language in their multi-discharge mercury variance, and adding a multi-discharge variance for ammonia. Certain portions of the Scioto River are being upgraded to Exceptional Habitat due to improvements in water quality. They will be public noticing final human health criteria around July 15. USEPA has objected to parts of the biocriteria narrative rulemaking and they are moving parts of that language to the permit implementation guidance. They are working on a new triennial review process. As a result of COVID and budget considerations, they are not hiring interns this year. She marked that Scioto River improvements are

the result of CSO improvements in the Columbus area, and a focus on headwater streams and removal of low head dams.

Pennsylvania

Kevin Halloran reported that PADEP was recently partially reopened offices while most employees continue to work remotely. Field activities are beginning to resume with 2-person boat crews. All PA state agencies are on a hiring and purchasing freeze. The state budget has been extended through November. The triennial review has been approved by the state and is awaiting final USEPA approval, and they are currently working on rulemaking for manganese. A consent decree has been executed with ALCOSAN regarding CSO and wet weather controls. Construction activities have resumed at the Shell petrochemical facility and their wastewater treatment plant will be online shortly.

West Virginia

Scott Mandirola reported that WVDEP is primarily working remotely. Permitting activities are on track, and there is a return to work policy. Field work is taking place, but with no overnight travel, little boat work with the exception of lake assessments, and with only one staff per vehicle. A PFAS survey being conducted by the USGS is slated to begin July 1. They will be sampling raw water from ground water and surface water intakes at 279 utilities statewide. Regarding standards, they are moving forward with some human health criteria. They are working with USEPA to get approval for a hardness-based aluminum criterion. They are working on a watershed-based variance to address multiple smaller discharges in a more holistic manner. The Bureau of Public Health is establishing zones of critical concern for surface water-influence ground water supplies. WVDEP is preparing for budget cuts which haven't occurred yet and there is no hiring freeze.

US Army Corps of Engineers

Erich Emery reported that the Corps is developing an R tool as well as an ARC-GIS work flow tool with a map viewer which they will be testing soon. They are also developing a national water quality data base of all the Corps' data, and it will be linked to the WQX national data base.

United States Environmental Protection Agency

Dave Pfeifer reported that in June, EPA's Water Finance Center released a Water Utility COVID-19 Financial Impact Tool to assist water utilities (drinking water, wastewater, and/or storm water utilities) in calculating the impact on their financial operations resulting from the COVID-19 crisis. EPA is developing COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for EPA Field Activities, and R5 will share with Richard Harrison when they are finalized. On June 18, EPA issued a final action on perchlorate in drinking water. EPA withdrew its 2011 determination to regulate perchlorate in drinking water under the Safe Drinking Water Act. Region 5 has cleared Ohio EPA to issue two NPDES general permits for discharges from coal mines. They have partially denied a citizen petition seeking withdrawal of the NPDES program from OH. The portion partially denied consisted of allegations directed at an agency, OH Department of Agriculture, that does not have an NPDES approved program. Finally, EPA approved Ohio's latest 303(d) list submittal on May 29, 2020.

USGS

Mike Griffin reported that the USGS is following COVID guidance from the CDC and Dept. of Interior. Staff was largely working remotely and are following adaptive operations plans to return to work. Field operations are returning to normal with multiple crew members allowed on boats and in vehicles. Their analytical labs have been open and operating throughout the pandemic. He reported that funding for their Super Gage Network in the Ohio Basin runs out in September and they are working to secure future funding to keep the network operational. A new Super Gage has been installed on the Wabash River.

Jeff Frey reported that a proposal for an Ohio River HABs network has been funded for six continuous monitoring sites, four on the Ohio River and two tributaries.

Power Industry Advisory Committee

Cheri Budzynski reported that utilities continue consideration of effluent limitation guidelines but this has been limited since they have not been finalized. The utilities have not experienced difficulties with monitoring and reporting during COVID. The utilities are currently reviewing Ohio's general permit for ephemeral streams and will be submitting comments.

Public Information Advisory Committee

Betsy Mallison reported that the Ohio River SWEEP is facing challenges this year with respect to COVID. A number of events have been moved to August 15 even though some are still scheduled to occur in June and July. They have been considering how best to move forward with the SWEEP this year and getting word out the communities.

Publicly Owned Wastewater Treatment Works Advisory Committee

Alex Novak reported that there are several national and international studies trying to correlate COVID in wastewater influent with COVID cases in the community. Louisville is participating in a couple of those studies. Additionally, Louisville is testing its influent, effluent and biosolids for PFAS on a quarterly basis, and there were no detections during the first three quarters of sampling. During COVID, there has been challenges with operators obtaining continuing education credits as required by their licenses, and there has been some discussion with states about the possibility of some relief until the regular means of obtaining such education resumes.

Watershed Organization Advisory Committee

Angie Rosser read a statement from outgoing Chairman Rich Cogen and reported that she is the new committee Chairman, and that they will be electing a Vice Chairman. He expressed concern that the ORBA strategy seems to prioritize commerce issues over environmental issues. He additionally expressed concern that water quality improvements have plateaued and that states need to evaluate their programs that implement the Clean Water Act to ensure that future improvements can be achieved. He expressed thanks to the Technical Committee for their efforts over the last couple of years of his participation.

The committee has met three times since the last TEC meeting. The reviewed and submitted comments on the ORBA Strategy, as well as on the Commission's strategic planning initiative. The committee has concerns about three proposed barge facilities on the Ohio River for transporting oil and gas liquid wastes, including wastes from unconventional drilling operations. They are in various stages of permitting by the Army Corps of Engineers. These facilities have significant implications for emergency response and source water protection. The committee has concerns about microplastics and has interest in seeing a baseline testing study to address this issue. Finally, the committee is concerned that agencies continue to receive adequate funding to continue to address water pollution control issues, and particularly as a result of COVID issues and impacts on agencies' budgets.

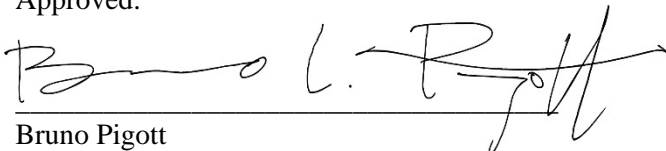
Water Users Advisory Committee

Bruce Whitteberry reported that the committee met virtually on March 20 which allowed for greater participation by committee members. Regarding the ODS renovation, the committee recommends for the upcoming budget that two new CMS5000 units be purchased. These are online units that operate somewhat independently. They reviewed a VOC analyte pilot project to consider additional VOCs that could be added to the ODS network, and they will continue to consider a list of ten additional candidate VOCs. Chris Bobay of Louisville Water Company was elected Vice Chairman of the WUAC and will serve in that role for the next year before moving to the Chairman's role. Lastly, he noted that water utility personnel are required to wear masks at work, while some employees are working remotely on a part-time basis. They also have concerns about continued operator certification programs during the COVID shutdown.

Adjournment

The 223rd meeting of the ORSANCO Technical Committee was adjourned by Chairman Pigott at 11:55 am on Wednesday, June 10, 2020.

Approved:



Bruno Pigott

Prepared by Jason Heath, P.E., BCEE with contributions from Ryan Argo and Sam Dinkins.
(Recording of proceedings available at Commission Headquarters)
PowerPoint presentations from this meeting are available on the Commission website at www.orsanco.org.

Roster of Attendance

Technical Committee

Chairman	Commissioner Bruno Pigott
Illinois	Scott Twait
Indiana	Eileen Hack
Kentucky	Katie McKone
New York	Not present
Ohio	Audrey Rush
Pennsylvania	Kevin Halloran
Virginia	Not present
West Virginia	Scott Mandirola
US Army Corps of Engineers	Erich Emery
US Environmental Protection Agency	David Pfeifer
US Geological Survey	Mike Griffin
Chemical Industry Advisory Committee	Not present
Power Industry Advisory Committee	Cheri Budzynski
Public Interest Advisory Committee	Betsy Mallison Bialosky
POTW Advisory Committee	Alex Novak
Water Users Advisory Committee	Bruce Whitteberry
Watershed Organizations Advisory Committee	Angie Rosser
NPDES Subcommittee	Brad Gavin
ORSANCO Chief Engineer	Richard Harrison
Staff Liaison	Jason Heath

Commissioners/Proxies

Stuart Bruny, Doug Conroe, Charles Duritsa, George Elmaraghy, David Flannery, John Kupke, Ron Lovan, David Miracle, Ron Potesta, Mike Wilson and Davitt Woodwell.

Staff

Ryan Argo, Dave Bailey, Bridget Borrowdale, Danny Cleves, Lisa Cochran, Stacey Cochran, Sam Dinkins, Joe Gilligan, Richard Harrison, Jason Heath, Melissa Mann, Adam Scott, Bridget Taylor, Jamie Tsiominas, Emilee Urichich, Greg Youngstrom, Lila Ziolkowski

Guests

Chris Bobay	Louisville Water Company
Robin Blakeman	Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition & WV Interfaith Power and Light
Rich Cogen	WOAC
Indra Frank	Hoosier Environmental Council
Jeff Fry	USGS
Peter Goodmann	Louisville Water Company
Dan Havallo	FirstEnergy
Dianna Henslee	FirstEnergy
John Hirschfield	Westlake Chemical
Christina Joiner	
Jim Lazorchak	USEPA
Alice Melendez	
Martha Clark Mettler	IDEM
Heather Davis Miller	National Wildlife Federation
Bruce Scott	
David Straub	
Daymond Talley	
Chris Tavenor	Ohio Environmental Council
Jeff Thomas	EPRI
Ward Wilson	Kentucky Waterways
Charles Wright	