



American Water Works Association Pacific Northwest Section

PNWS-AWWA Government Relations Division Report

Submitted by John Roth Past Chair and Government Relations Liaison

IDWARN:

Budget submitted no additional details at this time.

ORWARN:

Budget submitted no additional details at this time.

WAWARN:

Dave Brown with the City of Yakima has been the primary and often only contact for WAWARN over the past decade. The WAWARN website is hosted by the City of Yakima. Dave is retiring at or near the end of this year and there is no replacement. Nobody waiting in the wings to guide the WARN over the next year or years and the website hosting and maintenance is in jeopardy.

Water Utility Coordinating Council

Some great news, a Tri-State WUCC meeting has been set for November 17th this year. WUC's for Oregon, Washington and Idaho will be meeting in the Seattle Tacoma area, TBD for the first time since the onset of the pandemic. Chris Moody from AWWA National in Washington DC will be attending. This is a chance for the Councils to come together and share directly what they have been working on and hear from AWWA about emerging and ongoing efforts from a much broader/National perspective.

From April 27 – 28 About 140 AWWA delegates from across 40 states flew in to Washington DC to meet with legislators and staff for the annual Water Matters Fly-In. The 2022 Fly In was the first event held in Washington, D.C. since 2019. Mike Grimm reported that “3 issues we talked about with elected officials were full funding of IJJA, CERCLA hazardous chemical exemptions for water utilities (don't stick water utilities with a PFAs cleanup bill), and a co-regulatory approach to cybersecurity. All three of those are hot topics at this time and maybe not “critical” or “immediate” to some, but definitely AWWA is working on those issues as we speak.” At their meeting in June during the AWWA Annual Convention, the WUC discussed federal legislation for PFAs and the national chlorine supply chain issues.

Idaho Water Utility Council:

I did have a short conversation with John Wiscus during budgeting and the IDWUCC has been focused mostly on local water supply issues. They generate enough income to cover expenses and do have meetings.

Oregon Water Utility Council:

The Oregon WUCC delegation (Wally, Jessica, and Mike) met with all seven members of Congress from Oregon through mix of virtual and in-person meetings, some with staff members and some with the elected officials themselves. OWUC reported the meeting was very productive with little down time. OWUC issues included a request for Congress to continue to fund WIFIA loan projects which have graciously helped several Oregon water utilities, and a request for continued support of the Willamette Basin Reallocation effort allowing municipal water providers access to stored water in Willamette Valley Project reservoirs and funding for infrastructure improvement.

Washington Water Utilities Council:

The Washington WUC is quite active meeting monthly with members, regulators and other stakeholders. Meetings continue to be virtual.

Issues and Priorities

Each month they share updates on Washington legal cases of interest to members. A couple cases of interest working their way through the courts are a case about prevailing wages and water main installation, outside city rate premiums, and a couple regarding municipal water right uses involving change applications or transfer of rights.

The WWUC Water Rights Committee has led participation and involvement with the Foster Joint Legislative Task Force, provided input on the Department of Ecology's Policy 1050 which interprets law and describes how it is applied regarding water right permitting. They are now working to provide feedback on Policy 2030 which describes how the office interprets and applies Municipal Water Law. This is a wide ranging effort that seeks to provide feedback and perspective to legal access to water that the Department of Ecology has been charged by the legislature to review and evaluate.