

# I. Meeting Packet



**State of Florida**  
**Public Service Commission**  
**INTERNAL AFFAIRS AGENDA**  
Tuesday – August 16, 2022  
Immediately Following Hearing  
Room 148 - Betty Easley Conference Center

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1. Presentation by Gary Williams, Executive Director of the Florida Rural Water Association
2. General Counsel's Report
3. Executive Director's report
4. Other Matters

BB/aml

OUTSIDE PERSONS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION ON  
ANY OF THE AGENDAED ITEMS SHOULD CONTACT THE  
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT (850) 413-6463.

# III. Supplemental Materials for Internal Affairs

Note: The following material pertains to Item 1  
of this agenda.

# Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)



The Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) will provide relief to low-income families in Florida that spend a high proportion of their household income on water utility services. The purpose of the program is to retain continuity of water services to low-income households in Florida with an emphasis on prevention of disconnection and restoration of water services to households whose water services were previously disconnected.

Approximately \$75 million through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 was appropriated to Florida to assist low-income households with water and wastewater bills. This funding is federally administered by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and will be state administered by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO).

## Benefits & Allowable Costs:

- Per guidance provided by HHS, Florida's LIHWAP will serve low-income Florida families at or below 60 percent of the State Median Income (SMI), which will be adjusted based on the household size.
- Maximum benefit is up to \$1,000 per household for any combination of water and wastewater utilities. Allowable costs include:
  - Arrearages
  - Fees/Fines
  - Prepayment (Current Due Bills)

## LIHWAP Partnerships:

- DEO will utilize its network of Community Action Agencies across the state to administer the application intake and data verification process.
- Water Utility providers may also identify a potential LIHWAP applicant and refer the applicant to the Community Action Agency that serves their county to complete the application process to receive LIHWAP assistance.
- Community Action Agencies will administer payments directly to water and wastewater providers on behalf of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity for obligations made to LIHWAP households, and will then be reimbursed for obligations on a monthly basis.

For more information about the LIHWAP Program, please visit [www.FloridaJobs.org/LIHWAP](http://www.FloridaJobs.org/LIHWAP) or you may email specific questions regarding the program to [LIHWAP@DEO.MyFlorida.com](mailto:LIHWAP@DEO.MyFlorida.com).

Parties/Staff Handout  
Internal Affairs/Agenda  
on 8/16/22  
Item No. 1



# Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program

Division of Community Development  
Bureau of Economic Self-Sufficiency



## Vendor Identification Form

Water/Wastewater Entity Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Contact (Name and Title): \_\_\_\_\_

FEID: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Community Action Agency in Your Service Area (If known): \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program Contact (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

What region/areas does your company service? (\*If population served is unknown, please provide an approximation).

Counties/Regions	Population Served

\* Please send this completed form to [LIHWAP@DEO.MyFlorida.com](mailto:LIHWAP@DEO.MyFlorida.com). You may also contact [LIHWAP@DEO.MyFlorida.com](mailto:LIHWAP@DEO.MyFlorida.com) if you have questions about how to fill out this form.

Is your water/wastewater utility Publicly-Owned (\*managed by local or state governments) or Privately-Owned (\*managed by investors or shareholders)?

Public	
Private	

Please select the services your company provides. Check all that apply:

Water	
Wastewater	
Groundwater	
Stormwater	
Other	

If you selected 'Other' in the table above, please provide the name and a brief description of the program below:

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Does your company offer customers/clients any other programs/resources? (Example: LIHEAP) If yes, please provide the name and a brief description: \_\_\_\_\_

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Does your company have a set billing schedule? If yes, please provide the dates: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please provide your company's timeframe on refunds: \_\_\_\_\_

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Does your company maintain the ability to conduct business with the state of Florida (\*As it applies to the Convicted Vendor List identified in section 287.133(2), Florida Statutes (F.S.), or the Discriminatory Vendor List identified in section 287.134(2), F.S.)? \_\_\_\_\_

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\* Please send this completed form to [LIHWAP@DEO.MyFlorida.com](mailto:LIHWAP@DEO.MyFlorida.com). You may also contact [LIHWAP@DEO.MyFlorida.com](mailto:LIHWAP@DEO.MyFlorida.com) if you have questions about how to fill out this form.

# LIHWAP DCL-2021-12 Introduction to LIHWAP Invitation for Water Utility Vendors FY2021

Publication Date: July 29, 2021

## Low Income Household Water Assistance Program

### Dear Colleague Letter

**DCL#:** LIHWAP-DCL-2021-12  
**DATE:** July 29, 2021  
**TO:** Water Utility Vendors  
**SUBJECT:** LIHWAP Introduction Webinar Invitation  
**ATTACHMENT(S):** N/A

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Dear Colleagues,

The purpose of this message is to invite Water and Wastewater Utility Vendors to the upcoming *Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) Introduction webinar* on Thursday, August 12 from 3:00 — 4:00pm (ET). Registration information is provided at the end of this letter.

The Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) provides funds for assisting low-income households with water and wastewater bills. LIHWAP grants are available to States, the District of Columbia, U.S. Territories, and federally and state-recognized Indian Tribes and tribal organizations that received fiscal year 2021 Low Income Household Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) grants. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law No.: 116-260) signed on December 27, 2020, included \$638 million in funding with instructions for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to administer these grants. Additionally, on March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law No.: 117-2) appropriated an additional \$500 million to the new LIHWAP effort. The full appropriations language from both the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act are available on our office's website through the following weblink:

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/law-regulation/lihwap-laws-and-regulations>

## **LIHWAP Introduction Webinar**

Date: Thursday, August 12, 2021

Time: 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET)

Audience: All water and wastewater providers

Co-hosts: The webinar is being co-hosted by the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA ) and the National Energy and Utility Affordability Coalition (NEUAC ).

Purpose: This webinar will include an overview of the structure of the program at all levels, coordination of assistance for households, federal requirements of the program, and address water provider questions.

### **Registration Information**

We ask Water Utility Vendors to pre-register and to submit with your registration questions you would like to be addressed by the federal staff. Register in advance for this webinar using this link:

[https://acf-hhs-gov.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_vEKHHei4TPeP74NkS9Aclw](https://acf-hhs-gov.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_vEKHHei4TPeP74NkS9Aclw)

We look forward to working with you.

/s/

Lauren Christopher

Director, Division of Energy Assistance

Office of Community Services

### Files

 COMM\_LIHWAP\_DCL-2021-12 Introduction Webinar Invitation\_FY2021 (260.38 KB)



# IV. Transcript

BEFORE THE  
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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PROCEEDINGS: INTERNAL AFFAIRS

COMMISSIONERS PARTICIPATING: CHAIRMAN ANDREW GILES FAY  
COMMISSIONER ART GRAHAM  
COMMISSIONER GARY CLARK  
COMMISSIONER MIKE LA ROSA  
COMMISSIONER GABRIELLA PASSIDOMO

DATE: Tuesday, August 16, 2022

TIME: Commenced: 9:55 a.m.  
Concluded: 10:49 a.m.

PLACE: Betty Easley Conference Center  
Room 148  
4075 Esplanade Way  
Tallahassee, Florida

REPORTED BY: DEBRA R. KRICK  
Court Reporter and  
Notary Public in and for  
the State of Florida at Large

PREMIER REPORTING  
114 W. 5TH AVENUE  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA  
(850) 894-0828

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN FAY: All right. I have 9:55 a.m.  
We will start Internal Affairs.

As usual, Commissioners, I would like to recognize our Employee of the Month, Sevini Guffey, who is a Public Utility Analyst III in the Economic Impact section.

Sevini does a lot, so I'm going to try not to miss anything here in my talking points, but she works in all the CERCs, the statements of economic regulatory costs for the Commission. She's involved in the electric and gas approval and territorial agreements. She's been the lead analyst on numerous dockets, including the territorial agreements and purchased gas cost recovery.

She constantly, I would say sun like me, she gets her drafts in early, which is very impressive, Sevini. She has demonstrated commitment to working collaboratively, which we always appreciate at the Commission. And her members of her team are big supporters of her. She's always eager to learn something new. And most importantly, just constantly adds a positive attitude. Is just really a pleasure to talk with and meet with. And

1 so with her heavy workload and working with her  
2 colleagues, she still manages to keep that positive  
3 attitude for everyone.

4 So with that, Commissioners, if you could just  
5 join me in a round of applause of commending Sevini  
6 Guffey for our Employee of the Month.

7 (Applause from the audience.)

8 CHAIRMAN FAY: And thank you for taking the time to  
9 be here, Sevini. I appreciate it.

10 With that, Commissioners, we will move into  
11 our presentation for today by Gary Williams, the  
12 Executive Director for the Florida Rural Water  
13 Association. I know we've had information  
14 presented by the Rural Water Association before,  
15 but post-pandemic we wanted to have Mr. Williams  
16 back and see if he could provide some updates on  
17 some of the things they are working on, and then  
18 maybe questions and comments from the Commission.

19 So with that, Mr. Williams, I appreciate you  
20 being here, and you are recognized. And just make  
21 sure your mic is on there. We got you.

22 MR. WILLIAMS: Can you hear me?

23 CHAIRMAN FAY: Yes, we can. Thank you.

24 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 So I appreciate the opportunity to meet. I

1 would like to make this as conversational as  
2 possible, so I will probably touch on a few points.  
3 If you have questions or comments, you know, please  
4 interrupt me and we can have a discussion.

5 So the Florida Rural Water Association, as  
6 most of you know, is trade association for water  
7 and wastewater utilities in Florida. We work very  
8 closely with all of the water utilities, and we  
9 currently have 2,300 water and wastewater utility  
10 members throughout the state. So the association  
11 has grown from just representing the smaller  
12 systems to essentially representing all size  
13 systems. So all different types, the types  
14 for-profit, investor-owned, nonprofits, municipal,  
15 any of the governmental types of entities, special  
16 districts. So there is many types, and we work  
17 with all of them.

18 What I kind of like to do is start out with  
19 some issues that have been brought to our board of  
20 directors by our membership.

21 So last year at our annual conference 14  
22 points of interest were brought to our board of  
23 directors related to things that water utilities  
24 thought we needed to work on more for them. And  
25 you will probably find many of those interesting

1 and may have input and comments on that.

2 The highest priority that was brought to us is  
3 workforce concerns. Water utilities are struggling  
4 to hire certified operators, keep certified  
5 operators, and essentially all of their different  
6 staff depending on size of the system, engineers,  
7 all of those people are in a short supply, and it's  
8 become very, very, very competitive to find those  
9 people and to find operators that are required by  
10 the Department of Environmental Protection to be  
11 certified and operate every system.

12 So there is a real shortage in that area, and  
13 I am sure you hear it too. Not only are we seeing  
14 the shortage, but we are seeing the sharp increase  
15 in compensation needed to hire and keep these  
16 employees.

17 Florida Rural Water, we have 44 employees now,  
18 and we've had some turnover. And so in the last  
19 six months, I have seen starting salary for people  
20 that we hire have to go up \$10,000 just to bring  
21 people into the association. So that's just kind  
22 of indicative of the type of thing that we are  
23 seeing in the industry and that we are seeing on  
24 the workforce standpoint.

25 We do expect to move forward this year with

1 asking the State Legislature to look at the  
2 workforce issue and help us a little bit. And  
3 those issues that we are going to try to bring  
4 forward are trying to get statutory authority to  
5 allow reciprocity in the state of Florida.

6 Interestingly, Florida and the drinking water  
7 side of Nebraska are the only two states that don't  
8 have reciprocity for operators from one state, you  
9 know, to move and join the workforce in another  
10 state. So regulatorily, we don't have really a lot  
11 of options unless we address the statutory issue to  
12 allow it. So we are going to go forward and try to  
13 did that. It would still be that there would be a  
14 regulatory determination of level of operator, you  
15 know, and their classification to move to Florida.

16 Another thing we are going to try to do is get  
17 water and wastewater workforce clearly established  
18 as critical and essential. It hasn't really been  
19 established as that. Obviously they are clearly,  
20 you know, critical and essential because it's  
21 critical infrastructure. So we want to get the  
22 workforce, you know, established as that also.

23 We also want to have, in an emergency,  
24 out-of-state people that come to Florida to help  
25 water utilities for their credentials to be

1 recognized so that they can move in, operate  
2 facilities. That will allow the employees of that  
3 system to take care of family and take care of  
4 there home issues if we can bring home people in to  
5 back-stop them.

6 And then the fourth thing is we are going to  
7 ask for additional credit for military and veterans  
8 coming into our industry. We've noticed that  
9 that's a large number of people available in coming  
10 in. We want to make it easier for them to  
11 transition into the water and wastewater industry  
12 and get credit for their military experience, even  
13 if it's not directly related to environmental to  
14 water and wastewater, because they come in with a  
15 lot of credentials that we need in the industry,  
16 even if they are not going to be the operator for  
17 water and wastewater.

18 So those are the four things that we are going  
19 to approach the Legislature with related to getting  
20 authority to be able to expand the workforce. So I  
21 wanted to let you know that, that we are moving  
22 forward with the other water utility associations,  
23 American Water Works Association for Florida and  
24 the Florida Water Environment Association.

25 I want to mention also we've -- a couple of



1           years ago we started an apprenticeship program,  
2           which is an official two-year program, to train  
3           people coming into our industry. We've held two  
4           successful rounds of that. It's really taking off,  
5           and we are getting a number of people interested.  
6           And so starting in October, we plan to have four  
7           starting in the state. We will have one in the  
8           southeast, another one in the southwest. We will  
9           have one in the northeast, and we are going to have  
10          one in the Panhandle. We've been hearing from our  
11          members that that's a very good program, and we  
12          want to increase the amount of apprenticeship  
13          courses we can hold.

14                 How that really works is the water utility  
15          commits to have some people in the apprenticeship  
16          program, and then we get them certified and train  
17          them to be the best employee, not only in  
18          operations, but management, you know, finance and  
19          all of that. So it's more in -- it's a real  
20          beneficial two-year program recognized by the  
21          Department of Labor so they can get a credential  
22          that is actually nationwide.

23                 So that's kind of the first thing we heard  
24          from water utilities.

25                 The other thing we heard loud and clear was

1           that they need help on project completion. And  
2           what that essentially is, is that there is a lot of  
3           projects teed up. As you know, there is a lot of  
4           infrastructure money coming down through various  
5           programs, but many of the small systems needed help  
6           in making sure that they could apply for those  
7           monies, that they had the necessary information on  
8           the project to be able to be successfully awarded  
9           those loans and grants that are coming down.

10                 So we've added and expanded, like, five of our  
11           staff to actually help them fill out USDA rule  
12           development apply -- applications. SRF request for  
13           inclusion, and any other program for the  
14           application process to get started.

15                 We also have engineers on staff, and that's  
16           interesting. We have two on staff, but we are  
17           doing so many engineering projects, we are managing  
18           hundreds that we actually currently have 24 what I  
19           will call subengineers that work for the  
20           association that we ask to do work for small  
21           systems for a small contribution, so, like, 3,000  
22           or 4,000 to get some project moved forward and  
23           permitting accomplished.

24                 And so it's been a very good program. We keep  
25           adding engineers to it, because what happens is we

1 give them projects, they do a great job for the  
2 utility, and then they become, like, the preferred  
3 consultant for that utility, and they do more jobs  
4 for them, and so they don't have capacity to take  
5 on a bunch of additional ones. So it's been good  
6 for everybody. We keep adding people to it.

7 Typically, if we are not involved, they are  
8 probably going to have \$50,000 consulting fee. And  
9 so we tried to negotiate something, you know, in  
10 the \$3,000 to \$5,000 range so that the utility can  
11 afford it and move forward and get their project  
12 permitted and completed, and get it into the queue.  
13 So it's been very good, and very good for the water  
14 utilities too.

15 On that, I think I told you the last time we  
16 talked -- actually it's been a few years since I  
17 have been here in person. I think the last two  
18 times we talked was virtually, so it's good to be  
19 back. But we have this asset management program  
20 where we are doing extensive asset management  
21 programs for systems. We've done probably 250.  
22 We've actually teed up almost 500 million of needed  
23 water and wastewater projects based upon those  
24 asset management plans.

25 So what that means is we go in and we

1 determine the condition of their assets, the  
2 remaining useful life, when they need to move  
3 forward on replacement, repair, rehab, and that  
4 tees up projects that we then try to develop and  
5 move forward for funding. So we are trying to  
6 increase the reliability and sustainability of  
7 these systems and identify the projects and move  
8 them for funding.

9 So that's been a very good program, and that's  
10 why after we identified all these projects, that's  
11 when the systems came back and said, hey, we need  
12 help on the next step. We've identified the  
13 project we need, but we need help on moving them  
14 forward to get funded and get them, the projects  
15 needed.

16 So the other thing that we are dealing with on  
17 projects is there has been supply chain delays.  
18 And I will just, you know, kind of mention some of  
19 that. So it's been very tough to get materials  
20 needed for emergencies, and also to keep  
21 construction projects on, you know, moving forward.

22 We have used the utility helping utility  
23 method to try to keep those on point. So what that  
24 means is if somebody needs a special part, and we  
25 can't get it from a vendor, we've reached out

1 through the network to ask if any water utility  
2 would have that available in inventory, okay.

3 So we did that on emergencies, and then we  
4 started doing it on construction projects that were  
5 delayed. It works very effectively, but I have got  
6 some concerns going forward, because normally we  
7 are asking large utilities to look in their  
8 inventory and get stuff. They haven't been able to  
9 replace those by their vendors either, so we are  
10 depleting their inventories. And they are telling  
11 me now that they don't have a lot more stuff to tap  
12 to help this process move forward.

13 That gives me concern on the fact that, you  
14 know, the emergency and the construction projects.  
15 I will tell you what really gets me concerned is if  
16 we have a hurricane, typically the response from  
17 our utilities is what I call the baling wire and  
18 duct tape phase. We try to put it back together to  
19 work, and then we lean on some of the water  
20 utilities to find something in inventory so we can  
21 put new parts in and recover, but they are telling  
22 me they don't really have a lot to give. And if  
23 they can't get the stuff from vendors, the baling  
24 wire and duct tape phase is going to have to last a  
25 lot longer, and we may have to reapply the duct

1 tape and baling wire. And I am just really  
2 concerned about that in the fact for sustainability  
3 and reliability for these impacted water utilities,  
4 and so I have my fingers crossed that Florida  
5 continues to be lucky and not have impacts, but I  
6 am really concerned about it. And I wanted to  
7 mention it to you, because if it happens, you are  
8 going to hear about it too, I am sure.

9 COURT REPORTER: Excuse me. Mr. Williams,  
10 could you please just move a little closer to the  
11 mic? Thanks.

12 MR. WILLIAMS: Move closer?

13 COURT REPORTER: That's much better. You are  
14 just cutting in and out.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: I'm cutting in and out?

16 COURT REPORTER: Yes.

17 MR. WILLIAMS: Are you hearing the good words  
18 or the ones that you want to hear?

19 COURT REPORTER: I am just struggling to hear  
20 them all.

21 MR. WILLIAMS: Oh, okay.

22 COURT REPORTER: Sorry. Thank you.

23 MR. WILLIAMS: But anyway, the other thing  
24 that's happening on projects that I wanted to  
25 mention is currently most all projects have to meet

1 American Iron and Steel requirements. They also  
2 have to meet Davis Bacon.

3 There is a new requirement coming down that's  
4 called Buy American, Build American, okay. That  
5 requirement is going to take American Iron and  
6 Steel and make it more specific for all products.  
7 And right now, we are having quite an issue with  
8 getting American Iron and Steel, and we are going  
9 to have even more problem getting the Buy American  
10 products because they are not widely available.

11 So again, it's probably going to delay  
12 projects. I hope not too long. There is some  
13 waiver processes that are being considered  
14 federally, but none of them have been approved yet.  
15 So it's going to be an issue for all water  
16 utilities dealing with that supply concern, you  
17 know, based on that.

18 And we highly support the idea of, you know,  
19 buying American products, but we also know that  
20 there is going to have to be some kind of  
21 realization that if we can't get those, we still  
22 got to finish the project and improve the  
23 reliability and sustainability, so...

24 The other thing we heard from water utilities  
25 is they wanted more access to emergency response

1 equipment. Florida Rural Water, we use membership  
2 monies to buy a lot of equipment for water  
3 utilities. We try to buy stuff that they don't use  
4 every day that they may need access to, you know,  
5 once a year. It makes more sense to have community  
6 equipment on that than it does for them to buy it.

7 So we have -- we have, like, \$3 million worth  
8 of equipment that we lend and let water utilities  
9 use. And we have a huge warehouse in this area,  
10 but it's not very convenient for a lot of our  
11 members, so we are starting to add warehousing  
12 around the state so it's easier for people to come  
13 and get generators, bypass pumps, you know,  
14 whatever equipment that they might need in an  
15 emergency.

16 So we've got a place now in Gainesville, and  
17 we expect to try to put one in either south central  
18 or central Florida next so we can keep, you know,  
19 resources closer. We heard them strong -- loud and  
20 clear on that, and wanted to do that also.

21 Another thing that we heard is they needed  
22 help on utility customer relations and messaging.  
23 So we are going to try to provide a little bit more  
24 information on education, bill stuffers, you know,  
25 those types of things. And specifically I will use



1 an example.

2 So we continue to have sanitary sewer  
3 overflows, okay. The perception is, I think, that  
4 that is occurring because of failure of equipment.  
5 Now, that probably does happen, but more of the  
6 spills that we see are caused by customer behavior  
7 and what they are flushing. They are flushing  
8 disposable wipes, grease, oils and all of those  
9 types of things that then clog up the mechanisms,  
10 you know, the pumps and cause the spills.

11 So we got to do a better job at getting the  
12 message out to the customer base that their  
13 activities are causing environmental concerns. And  
14 the fines now on sanitary sewer overflows have  
15 tripled. So we are seeing immediate, you know,  
16 penalties on the systems, which unfortunately, you  
17 know, ultimately will be reflected in rates that we  
18 don't want the customers to have to pay for stuff  
19 if think can change behavior. So we expect to have  
20 a lot of information out about that.

21 The fifth one we heard was more legislative  
22 advocacy, issue updates coming to water utilities,  
23 advocacy requests for engagement with on the  
24 legislative issues. So we are trying to get more  
25 involved in that.

1           They asked for specific help related to legal,  
2           and it was somewhat interesting to me. They want  
3           more help on limited issues like updating bylaws,  
4           operating agreements, customer agreements,  
5           documents, that type of thing.

6           I don't think we are probably hearing that  
7           from the groups that you regulate because you help  
8           them, but I think we are hearing it more from the  
9           nonprofits, the governmental entities and all of  
10          that, that essentially have let some of their  
11          governing documents get old and not appropriate.

12          So probably, if we do something there, we will  
13          probably provide, you know, limited legal  
14          assistance to help them update those documents. So  
15          probably not long cases, any of that. It would be  
16          some kind of way we just could help them in a  
17          limited scope.

18          Another one that we heard was critical asset  
19          protection. Many of these assets that we are going  
20          to have to pardon and we are going to have to  
21          replace need to be elevated and protected from  
22          flooding, storm surge, weather issues. We've added  
23          a couple of people on staff that are right now  
24          actually writing mitigation grant proposals for  
25          water utilities.

1           And that's interesting, the main program has  
2           been FEMA because they put more money into  
3           mitigation than they do emergency response. But  
4           EPA now has specifically water grant utility  
5           programs. Of course the State of Florida has put a  
6           lot more money into coastal resiliency and  
7           sustainability.

8           So there is a lot more programs out there if  
9           we can bring these projects forward so that we  
10          protect the assets. And we really want to do that,  
11          because that's a heck of a lot better to elevate  
12          and harden them so that they continue to work, than  
13          have to replace them after an event.

14          So if we can get the water utilities more  
15          engaged in supporting that, we can write the  
16          mitigation grant agreements, and everybody  
17          qualifies for those, so we really want to move  
18          those forward.

19          Any questions or input on all of that?

20                 CHAIRMAN FAY: I have some questions for you,  
21          Mr. Williams --

22                 MR. WILLIAMS: Sure.

23                 CHAIRMAN FAY: -- but I didn't know if you had  
24          other -- I know you said we could interrupt you,  
25          but I don't know how many more points you had so --

1           MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah. I have got a bunch more,  
2           but I really want this to be conversational, so I  
3           hope you will jump in.

4           CHAIRMAN FAY: Perfect. No problem. So then  
5           maybe I will start backwards.

6           So on the critical assets, it sounds like you  
7           are looking at some federal funding mechanisms, or  
8           some state funding mechanisms to potentially help  
9           on the front end with mitigation, or protection,  
10          instead of mitigation on the back end, is that kind  
11          of what you are saying?

12          MR. WILLIAMS: Yes. Yeah, that's -- we want  
13          to promote hardening those critical assets. So  
14          what that kind of means is if you are coastal, many  
15          of our lift station control panels and all of that  
16          are not elevated. And so if we have flooding or  
17          storm surge, you know, they are damaged and  
18          destroyed. If we can elevate them, put them on  
19          some kind of platform, where they won't get flooded  
20          out, we are going to be in much better shape.

21          CHAIRMAN FAY: Okay. And then -- I am going  
22          to jump around a little bit on your points, but  
23          on -- as it relates to that, if those -- if there  
24          are financial resources that are available from  
25          either a federal or a state level, do you feel

1           like, with some of these other issues you  
2           mentioned, do you feel like you have the resources  
3           to be able to at least pursue those?

4           I mean issues, know there is no guarantee when  
5           it comes to grants, that you will recover based on  
6           the time you are putting into them, but do you feel  
7           that you are at least able to compete with maybe a  
8           hypothetically what another state's equivalent  
9           smaller water utilities would be competing for?

10           MR. WILLIAMS: Yes. I -- mainly because I  
11           don't think the other states are focusing on trying  
12           to help move these projects forward. So what we  
13           hear more is some of the mitigation dollars that  
14           FEMA has go unused because they don't have enough  
15           projects to consider. And we had five that we --  
16           that didn't meet the FEMA requirement. We just  
17           forwarded them to EPA region in Atlanta for  
18           consideration, and I think they are going to fund  
19           those. So there is options if we can tee up these  
20           projects.

21           CHAIRMAN FAY: Okay. Good.

22           And then when you were talking about the  
23           assistance as it relates to -- folks under our  
24           regulatory structure typically have the assistance  
25           of our staff and the Commission operation to do

1 certain things those munici-- some municipality run  
2 entities don't have that equivalent for them. Is  
3 there documentation, or is there something that the  
4 Commission either currently puts out, or could put  
5 out, that would then also be assistance for those  
6 municipalities; or do you think it's just more that  
7 we have the right people that can help the water  
8 utilities under our regulation submit what they  
9 need to?

10 MR. WILLIAMS: I think your staff helped  
11 provide them keep their documentation and governing  
12 documents, for lack of a better term, up to date.  
13 Some of the other types of systems don't  
14 necessarily look at that. So is there stuff that  
15 you do that could be beneficial? Yes. And I am  
16 sure we will use some of that.

17 I will tell you that your index issues widely  
18 across the state related to rate stuff for  
19 non-Public Service Commission utilities. So, you  
20 know, you establishing it becomes a benchmark for  
21 people to at least look at, trying to meet the cost  
22 of living increase, or the CPI, in keeping their  
23 rates, you know, current.

24 Because obviously, one of the things that  
25 bothers customers the most is not having periodic

1 rate adjustments, and then after 10 years, you have  
2 to have a 75-percent increase. And so we really  
3 try to encourage them, you know, to keep current  
4 with their rates. And we use information that you  
5 use to show them, you know, the justification, or  
6 the information that they could use to show the  
7 customers why the costs are going up.

8 CHAIRMAN FAY: Okay. Great.

9 MR. WILLIAMS: I will do one example of how we  
10 use stuff from the Commission.

11 CHAIRMAN FAY: Okay. And do you know of other  
12 bylaw components, are those proprietary, or I mean,  
13 are those something that could be shared with the  
14 -- if you are talking about legal resources, I  
15 mean, I am just wondering if there is sort of a  
16 generalized template of, you know, what a utility  
17 could use that then could be provided to these  
18 other entities that may not have the financials to  
19 hire, you know, additional legal services.

20 MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, and bylaws, we typically  
21 see those as governing documents and nonprofits,  
22 special districts, you know, some of those types.  
23 On the governmental side, typically we see  
24 ordinances that are not kept up to date. So there  
25 is different governing documents for each type, and

1 we just want to make sure that those are kept up to  
2 date, because that's where a lot of the challenges  
3 come --

4 CHAIRMAN FAY: Sure.

5 MR. WILLIAMS: -- from. When things aren't  
6 kept up to date, decisions are made, and then all  
7 of a sudden they find out they don't even have the  
8 documentation to be able to support the decision  
9 that's made. So we are just trying to, you know,  
10 keep that up to date.

11 CHAIRMAN FAY: And you typically see these  
12 issues as the smaller the utility the more these  
13 issues arise, and that they don't have the  
14 resources, or is that not a correlation?

15 MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, I would say for sure, the  
16 smaller they are, you know, it may be a one person  
17 operation, you know, that's operating the system,  
18 that's managing the system, you know, they don't  
19 necessarily have what I would call the legal  
20 background or, you know, that type of information.  
21 So the smaller the system, the more limited the  
22 number of staff, the more hats that staff person  
23 has to wear that may not be in their wheelhouse.

24 CHAIRMAN FAY: Yeah. I know we've heard from  
25 some of the co-ops and the rural electric folks



1           that some people do eight jobs essentially that  
2           would be divided out on other company structures.  
3           So I am guessing you have the same type of  
4           cross-training for resources?

5           MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah. I am happy to hear that  
6           they are doing eight jobs. It's better than them  
7           doing six and two not even being considered.

8           CHAIRMAN FAY: Fair enough.

9           And then I have one more question for you, and  
10          I want to make sure my colleagues have the  
11          opportunity if they have any questions.

12          So on the federal programs on the customer  
13          side, I don't know how much you have looked into  
14          this, but I know there is a lot of discussion about  
15          funding packages that come out of Congress pretty  
16          much every day at this point, and so we are  
17          constantly trying to figure out what those entail  
18          states.

19          It's my understanding that there is some  
20          implementation from health and human services  
21          through our Department of Economic Opportunity that  
22          is implementing a program that's kind of similar to  
23          LIHEAP, but essentially -- I think it's LIHWAP, and  
24          I don't know what WAP stands for, but whatever the  
25          program essentially includes. Can you talk about

1           that? Is that something you are working on or you  
2           are aware of?

3           MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, we are aware of that. In  
4           fact, the DEO program folks were just at our annual  
5           conference last week and had a table, so that they  
6           could educate the water utilities about that  
7           program.

8           So that program is essentially a Low-Income  
9           Household Water Assistance Program. So what that  
10          means is low-income people can get rate help for  
11          paying their water utility bill. It requires the  
12          water utility and the customer to work together,  
13          and the money is distributed through whatever  
14          entity, through a community agent -- community  
15          action programs locally. So all the water  
16          utilities are eligible to be involved in this  
17          program. So we have been promoting the program and  
18          providing information to our members.

19          And, you know, the -- right now, it's for  
20          essentially catching up. And that's kind of is one  
21          of the -- I know when we talked a couple of years  
22          ago, the issue related to the pandemic was many  
23          people fell behind in their water bills and  
24          couldn't really pay what was in arrears, or pay  
25          going forward to get current.

1           Most of the water utilities went to a  
2 non-shutoff policy during the pandemic, so they  
3 don't shut people off. But at some point, they had  
4 to convert back to collecting that money and having  
5 a shutoff policy to get the revenue to cover their  
6 expenses.

7           So this program was kind of designed to be a  
8 bridge for that. So if somebody fell behind,  
9 couldn't catch up, this was a program where you  
10 could actually, water utility and the customer, go  
11 forward to DEO and get money to pay the rates -- or  
12 the water bills in arrears, catch up and help pay  
13 going forward if you met the income, you know,  
14 requirements.

15           CHAIRMAN FAY: But you --

16           MR. WILLIAMS: Does that help?

17           CHAIRMAN FAY: Yeah, but you would need -- in  
18 other words, the utility and the customer couldn't,  
19 on their own, go and do that. You would need some  
20 sort of community action agency -- you need some  
21 entity in the community that would be able to  
22 qualify for the funds to then pay those bills, is  
23 that what you are saying? And we can always go to  
24 DEO to get more information.

25           MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, it's my understanding

1           that the money is not sent directly to the  
2           customer. It's not sent directly to the water  
3           utility. They have to cooperate. But there is a  
4           distribution method, some community action agency  
5           that would get the money from DEO and use it for  
6           the purpose intended. So they would be the people  
7           that would probably distribute it to the water to  
8           pay off the bill.

9           CHAIRMAN FAY: Okay. Yeah, I know with larger  
10          utilities in all different areas, water, gas,  
11          electric, there are different regulatory functions  
12          and structures when it comes to those arrears; but  
13          it seems like for small water, a lot of times the  
14          operating income can be in the red, and so if you  
15          then have customers with arrears, it's just sort of  
16          piling on to the issue. And so if there is, like,  
17          there is a program out there that is intended to do  
18          this, I just want to make sure from a Commission  
19          perspective that there isn't something within our  
20          capacity that, you know, would be able to assist  
21          with that. We typically don't do anything  
22          granulated because we are a regulatory agency,  
23          but --

24          MR. WILLIAMS: I would think you guys could,  
25          you know, promote that, support that.

1           What we have tried to suggest is that the  
2           water utilities have promotional material and  
3           essentially, for lack of a better term, like an  
4           application at the water utility, so when people  
5           come in, they can fill that out and move forward.

6           So I think, you know, that's what we have  
7           provided them to try to encourage this. And we  
8           really want them to do that, because unfortunately,  
9           if people fall behind, we don't want to turn them  
10          off, but somebody is going to have to pay the  
11          additional, you know, costs. So the paying  
12          customers are going to have to pay for the ones  
13          that didn't pay, you know, to generate the revenue  
14          to meet the expenses of the water utility. So we  
15          really want these people to get current and help  
16          them going forward.

17          CHAIRMAN FAY: Sure. And I think we can  
18          probably direct people to the appropriate  
19          information on our end, so we will do that.

20          And I know I said last question, but I do have  
21          one more for you.

22          MR. WILLIAMS: I will leave this for you.

23          CHAIRMAN FAY: Okay.

24          MR. WILLIAMS: Is that okay?

25          CHAIRMAN FAY: Yeah, that's fine. We can

1 leave it with the staff and make sure the  
2 Commission offices get it.

3 Last issue, just I want to know if you had any  
4 thoughts. I know the operations, since they are  
5 rural based are typically very community oriented  
6 and community-based. We see a lot of discussion  
7 about acquisition of water utilities just in  
8 general, and if they are being scaled, does that  
9 improve services and that type of thing. Is that  
10 something that your association talks about, or is  
11 it something that people present to you, or is it  
12 viewed as not maybe a great mechanism to improve?

13 MR. WILLIAMS: No, I think it's -- I think  
14 it's worked very effectively. We are currently, in  
15 Florida, down to about 5,000 water utilities. When  
16 I started, I don't know, 25 years ago, there were  
17 7,500 water utilities.

18 So a lot of consolidation and regionalization  
19 has occurred for the benefit, you know, economies  
20 of scale and, you know, combining and getting  
21 larger revenue base to support the expenses and all  
22 of that. So I think it's worked very effectively.

23 The only problem I see now is most of what I  
24 will call the low hanging fruit for consolidation  
25 and regionalization has occurred. Most of the

1 systems are now quite aways apart, you know, from a  
2 distance standpoint, to combine them and do that.  
3 We still promote it.

4 From our engineering side, it's one of the  
5 alternatives at all times. Instead of, you know,  
6 building a bunch of new facilities, is there a  
7 possibility that combining a couple of systems  
8 would reduce that burden. So we still look at it,  
9 but it's just not as prevalent.

10 Now, as far as acquiring systems, we still see  
11 that occurring, but the one thing we've seen in the  
12 last year, and I don't know, probably you too,  
13 we've seen a lot of sales and a lot of ownership  
14 change in what I will call the more small private  
15 systems. Specifically, like the mobile home parks,  
16 we are seeing a lot of ownership change that's  
17 occurred in the last 12 months, and the reason we  
18 know that is because they are a member of ours, and  
19 we will, you know, ask them to renew, and then we  
20 will find out that the current owner sold it, and  
21 that, you know, we are given the new owner's name,  
22 you know, to contact. And typically, the operators  
23 stay the same, so they are the ones that typically  
24 let us know about those transactions.

25 Are you seeing the same thing, a lot of that?

1           CHAIRMAN FAY: From a quantified standpoint, I  
2           don't know if we've really seen that much more than  
3           in the past few years, but there are certain  
4           exemptions for those functions that, depending on  
5           what's filed, we may not see or not if it meets one  
6           of those exemptions, so, yeah, I am not sure we  
7           could speak to the total number.

8           MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah.

9           COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: I appreciate the  
10          feedback.

11          I did want to make sure, Commissioners, if you  
12          had any other questions.

13          Commissioner La Rosa, you recognized.

14          COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Thank you, Chairman.

15          In fact, that was kind of my leading question,  
16          I was thinking about that as we were talk walking  
17          in here today, you know, what else can be done to  
18          really encourage the sale of water systems that  
19          would benefit the customer? Obviously, we talked  
20          about economies of scale and so forth. I guess --  
21          I know you answered part of that question already.

22          What benefits do you see, if any, of the  
23          acquisitions happening with, you know, mobile home  
24          parks and such, with new owners coming in? Are  
25          they making upgrades? Are they operating more



1           professionally? I am kind of curious to get your  
2           input on that.

3           MR. WILLIAMS: I think, to be honest with you,  
4           it's somewhat shocking to the new owners, the  
5           complexity of what they have bought.

6           You know, we see a lot of them buy it  
7           thinking, okay, this is going to be a good  
8           retirement income and, you know, something for me  
9           to do. And then they find out all the, you know,  
10          things that go along with a water and wastewater  
11          utility.

12          And when I say a mobile home park type of  
13          thing, they are typically buying the whole mobile  
14          home park, and they get the water and wastewater as  
15          part of that, and that part is somewhat shocking to  
16          them. You know, they are looking at, wow, I am  
17          going to collect lot rent, and I am going to be a  
18          neighbor to my, you know, people and all of that  
19          type of stuff, and they look at it like, you know,  
20          it's something to do, and then they find out the  
21          regulatory aspects of the water and wastewater.

22          They may find out that they have a lot of  
23          investment to make because the infrastructure has  
24          deteriorated and that there is going to be a whole  
25          lot more costs than they thought.

1           So I would say more generally it's shocking,  
2           but most of them that are buying it have enough  
3           resources to invest back in to the water and  
4           wastewater system.

5           It's interesting, when people -- the way I  
6           look at when people buy a mobile home park,  
7           typically that's the community that they live in,  
8           and they are, like, buying it, you know, to try to  
9           give back to their community. And so many of those  
10          are resistant to raise water rates and do stuff  
11          like that because they don't want to pass the  
12          charge on to the people in their community where  
13          they live and their friends live. So they don't  
14          necessarily operate it like a business. They  
15          operate it more like a, oh, I bought this and I  
16          want to keep all my friends and customers happy.

17          COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Do you find those  
18          situations happening often to where they are coming  
19          to you guys faux assistance or help?

20          MR. WILLIAMS: They definitely come to us  
21          related to, you know, technical, you know,  
22          concerns, regulatory compliance, and all of that  
23          type of thing. And we try to encourage them to  
24          make contact with you, ask for some, you know, of  
25          your services and that type of thing, because they

1 are definitely going to qualify.

2 But, again, philosophically, a lot of them  
3 will say, I really don't want to go down that path  
4 and raise rates. And so that gives me a concern  
5 related to reliability and sustainability of that  
6 utility if they don't invest back.

7 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: You also mentioned when  
8 you started workforce, which I think we are seeing  
9 that across all industries. Where do you generally  
10 -- where does the industry generally pull its  
11 workforce from? And I am going to kind of give you  
12 an example to better clarify my question.

13 So I am, you know, my previous life, I'm in  
14 the real estate business. So a lot of folks that  
15 get into the commercial side of real estate  
16 typically come from finance, or from banking, or  
17 from, you know, from accounting. Do you have a  
18 source of industry that maybe kind of transitions  
19 into operations? What do you guys see, kind of  
20 just where is the job forcing going?

21 MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, we have not been very  
22 good at recruiting real young people. For some  
23 reason, water and wastewater is not very appealing  
24 to kids in high school and college.

25 So the average -- last I knew, the average age

1 of the person entering our profession is, like, 42  
2 years old. So it's a second career where people  
3 are coming from. And that's -- we are seeing it  
4 from the military, as I mentioned. We are seeing  
5 law enforcement. We are seeing a lot of what I  
6 would call the more strenuous trades people are  
7 like, hey, I can't continue to climb this pole if I  
8 am a lineman. I got to find something else that I  
9 can do.

10 So that's where we are seeing people coming in  
11 from second professions. And, you know, they are  
12 good people because they already have a work ethic  
13 and they, you know, have been successful, but they  
14 don't come in with the environmental side a lot of  
15 times.

16 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Sure. Sure.

17 Last question, and I would be reluctant if I  
18 didn't ask.

19 So reading on your website, and I am looking  
20 at it now, you guys have started, looks like  
21 recently, the Public Service Commission Study  
22 Committee. Have you guys found that useful, and  
23 has there been any findings working with staff?

24 MR. WILLIAMS: Excuse me?

25 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Yeah, sure. So you

1           guys have started, it looks like, the Public  
2           Service Commission Study Committee. I am assuming  
3           that's within your organization?

4           MR. WILLIAMS: The Public Service Study  
5           Commission?

6           COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Yep. That's what it  
7           says on your website.

8           MR. WILLIAMS: I think our website may have  
9           some dated information.

10          COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Got you. Okay. Okay.  
11          That's fair enough.

12          MR. WILLIAMS: So back in, I think it was  
13          2014, when the State Legislature had an effort  
14          related to the study commission, and we were  
15          involved in that. So it's probably information  
16          related back to then, and different things that  
17          were discussed by the study commission that were  
18          then brought, you know, forward.

19          COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Sure. And you have  
20          already noted in the conversation back and forth a  
21          lot that you have done, of course, with our staff.  
22          I was kind of curious to see if any of that came  
23          out of that, but it looks like there is a pretty  
24          good working relationship among --

25          MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, your Commissioner that

1           was involved in that study commission was Julie  
2           Brown.

3           COMMISSIONER LA ROSA:    Sure.

4           MR. WILLIAMS:    So she was highly involved in  
5           that whole activity.  It lasted a couple of years.  
6           A lot of good discussion out of it, and a lot of  
7           points brought forward, and the Legislature acted  
8           on some of those on your behalf, so...

9           COMMISSIONER LA ROSA:    Thank you.  I  
10          appreciate it, Chairman.

11          CHAIRMAN FAY:   Great.  Thank you.

12          Mr. Williams, I think we have gone a little  
13          bit over our time allotted.  That's in part because  
14          I hogged all the questioning, but I did want to  
15          give you a chance, just if there was any sort of  
16          last component that you wanted to get to on your  
17          list, or final closing remarks you wanted to give  
18          to the Commission going forward.  We will take the  
19          information that you provide us, and obviously  
20          present that to the offices too, the written  
21          documentation.

22          MR. WILLIAMS:    Okay.

23          CHAIRMAN FAY:    If there is anything else you  
24          wanted to add before we moved on to our other  
25          business, I want to give you the opportunity.

1           MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, if I can touch just -- I  
2           won't go into depth. I will touch on a couple of  
3           things that are coming up.

4           CHAIRMAN FAY: Okay.

5           MR. WILLIAMS: So supply chain issues. We've  
6           seen chemical prices almost triple. And it gives  
7           me great concern, especially on chlorine, that that  
8           has a disproportionate impact on the smaller  
9           systems since it's a high cost and a high increase.

10          I am also hearing from the chemical  
11          manufacturers that supply may get worse, because  
12          there is some regulation related to removing some  
13          of the components out of the manufacturing process.

14          And also the manufacturers are telling us that  
15          their union is possibly going to go on strike. And  
16          if those two things occur, we are going to have  
17          quite a supply issue on chlorine.

18          Proactively, we have went and asked for, if  
19          there is not enough chlorine, that the pool  
20          industry chlorine could be redirected to the public  
21          water supply industry. It's just it has a  
22          different NSF regulatory number, but it's the same  
23          product.

24          So if that happens, we've tried to take some  
25          proactive action to be able to get the supply

1           that's needed. We won't be very popular with the  
2           pool owners, but at least the drinking water will  
3           stay disinfected.

4           So I wanted to point that out to you, because  
5           if you have got people coming in saying, mane,  
6           these chemical costs are sharply increasing, you  
7           know, it's probably them asking to consider that as  
8           a pass-through cost, you know, from your  
9           standpoint.

10           Cybersecurity, big issue. I will give you an  
11           assurance that I do not think that we have a lot of  
12           operational risk, but we are seeing a lot of  
13           ransomware attacks on water utilities. And not all  
14           of them are making the news because people are  
15           embarrassed when they lose their customer accounts  
16           and have to, you know, recover them somehow.

17           So it's a main concern for me on the cyber  
18           area is, you know, they end up having -- they don't  
19           have good backups. They lose their customer data.  
20           They have to get it back somehow or they can't even  
21           bill. But what concerns me more is now that  
22           sensitive customer data is out, and identity theft  
23           would then be a big concern I would think for  
24           customers.

25           So very concerned about that. I am not sure



1           what we can do other than just encourage  
2           cybersecurity protections, backup, you know, being  
3           more diligent, you know, related to that, so bring  
4           that up.

5                     Another one PFAS. You probably have heard  
6           that. Recently the EPA came out with a health  
7           advisory level at almost zero. I expect the  
8           maximum contaminant level goal to be zero. And I  
9           expect the maximum contaminant level to probably be  
10          less than five parts per trillion. And if that's  
11          the case, every water utility in Florida is going  
12          to have PFAS. So it's a concern of mine that I  
13          wanted to bring up.

14                    You can treat for it. But I am also concerned  
15          the treatment is an absorption media, okay. Once  
16          the media has the PFAS absorbed, it's going to be  
17          classified as a hazardous waste, and then disposal  
18          of it is going to be very expensive and tough.

19                    Right now, the closest place to dispose of  
20          that media is in Port Arthur, Texas. They are the  
21          only one that have the incinerator with the air  
22          scrubber to be able to deal with that.

23                    So just giving you the heads-up that PFAS is  
24          going to be problematic for all the water  
25          utilities, I think, in Florida. And when I say

1           waters utilities, if we don't remove it out of the  
2           water, it's passing through the water going into  
3           the wastewater process. It's not being removed by  
4           biologically there. It's ending up in the sludge.  
5           And so now we can't dispose of the sludge and the  
6           biosolids. So I look at regulation on both sides  
7           impacting water and wastewater utilities.

8           CHAIRMAN FAY: Mr. Williams, I am going to ask  
9           you just, if you could, close up, because I want to  
10          make sure we get to our other business --

11          MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah --

12          CHAIRMAN FAY: -- in our timeframe.

13          MR. WILLIAMS: I wanted to make sure I was --  
14          okay. I think I have covered it all.

15          CHAIRMAN FAY: Okay. Great. And we know  
16          where to find you if we --

17          MR. WILLIAMS: What's that?

18          CHAIRMAN FAY: I said, we know where to find  
19          you too if we need anything. We appreciate you  
20          being responsive --

21          MR. WILLIAMS: Any time I can help. I see us  
22          as all helping water utilities.

23          CHAIRMAN FAY: Agreed. Agreed. I think it's  
24          a shared mission by the Commission and your entity,  
25          and everyone involved, so I appreciate that.

1           And as I have heard a wise Commissioner say,  
2           it's the only thing we do where the product is  
3           ingested, and so I think the significance of it is  
4           not lost on us as we take up those dockets, so I  
5           appreciate your help.

6           MR. WILLIAMS: Well, thank you, and I am sorry  
7           I ran over.

8           CHAIRMAN FAY: No, absolutely not. We  
9           appreciate the information. That's why we wanted  
10          you here.

11          With that, Commissioners, we will move on to  
12          our -- and thank you again, Mr. Williams -- we will  
13          move on to our General Counsel's report.

14          MS. HELTON: We have no report. Thank you,  
15          Mr. Chairman.

16          CHAIRMAN FAY: Okay. Great. Thank you, Ms.  
17          Helton, and you are in charge this week, so  
18          hopefully we won't have anything come up.

19          Mr. Baez, you are recognized for the Executive  
20          Director report.

21          MR. BAEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was  
22          tempted to yield my time because just as a way of  
23          thanking Mr. Williams, you can see all the things  
24          that he does for his membership, but he is also a  
25          golden resource for us and the rest of staff, so I

1 think any comments on our good working relationship  
2 I think is an understatement, and I truly mean  
3 that.

4 I know I have got -- and I wrote it in red so  
5 I could actually read it. I have got a ton of  
6 factoids and actually good questions that I think  
7 might become action items at some point, but  
8 definitely a good discussion. So thank you for  
9 that, Mr. Williams.

10 Beyond that, I don't have a substantive report  
11 for today. Just know that looking down the road,  
12 our next IA in September, we do have lined up the  
13 draft report for the 10-year site plans -- no, I am  
14 sorry, the status on the staff assisted rate cases,  
15 so I misspoke. So that's sort of a follow-on to  
16 this, as well as the draft regulatory plan, which  
17 may have some poor-in issues off of the discussion,  
18 so I would keep a close eye on that.

19 Unless there is any questions, that's the end  
20 of my comment.

21 CHAIRMAN FAY: Okay. Great. Thank you, Mr.  
22 Baez.

23 Any questions for Mr. Baez? Nope.

24 Seeing none. Thank you for the update.

25 With that, Commissioners, make sure there

1           aren't any other matters on our end. With that,  
2           seeing no other matters, this Internal Affairs  
3           meeting is adjourned.

4                   Thank you so much.

5                   (Proceedings concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF FLORIDA )  
COUNTY OF LEON )

I, DEBRA KRICK, Court Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing proceeding was heard at the time and place herein stated.

IT IS FURTHER CERTIFIED that I stenographically reported the said proceedings; that the same has been transcribed under my direct supervision; and that this transcript constitutes a true transcription of my notes of said proceedings.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties' attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

DATED this 29th day of August, 2022.



DEBRA R. KRICK  
NOTARY PUBLIC  
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EXPIRES AUGUST 13, 2024