



MEMORANDUM

TO: Water Resources Commission

FROM: Thomas M. Byler, Director
Doug Woodcock, Deputy Director

SUBJECT: Agenda Item C, September 5, 2019
Water Resources Commission Meeting

100-Year Water Vision

I. Introduction

During this agenda item, staff will brief the Commission on efforts underway for the 100-Year Water Vision.

II. Background

In 2018, the Governor's office, with support from state agencies, announced efforts to develop a 100-Year Water Vision for Oregon's water future. The intent of the Water Vision is to raise awareness and catalyze action to address Oregon's pressing and critical need to invest in water resources, particularly natural and built infrastructure. Strategic investments will result in resilient natural and built water infrastructure across the state for our communities, economy, safety, and environment.

The 2017 Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS) is the foundational strategy for this work. The IWRS charts the course for Oregon's in-stream and out-of-stream water resource needs, with the Water Vision taking steps to implement the actions identified in the IWRS. The IWRS identifies key issues including: (1) understanding our water resources, (2) understanding our water needs and demands, (3) understanding coming pressures (population, climate, aging infrastructure, etc.), and (4) meeting our water needs, including investing in water data and infrastructure and planning. The 100-Year Water Vision picks up on those themes, designing approaches with the intent of developing an investment strategy to address those issues, addressing economic, community, and environmental needs related to water (see Attachment 1).

III. Developing a Support Structure

Meta Loftsgaarden, Executive Director for the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), will serve as the point person for the Governor's Office for this work in coordination with the Governor's Natural Resource Office to provide leadership for this effort on the Governor's behalf. Directors from the Oregon Water Resources Department (Department), OWEB and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) are coordinating on behalf of the agencies to lead the effort.

In addition to the work of the Governor's Office and water directors, two additional teams have been formed to support this work.

Water Core Team: The Water Core Team will ensure timely and efficient cross-agency coordination and communication at an executive level on urgent and emergent water related issues involving multiple agencies. In addition to the Department, Oregon state agencies with representation on the team include: OWEB, DEQ, Marine Board, Oregon Health Authority, Business Oregon, Parks and Recreation Department, Regional Solutions, and the Departments of Fish and Wildlife, Agriculture, Forestry, Land Conservation and Development, State Lands, and Transportation. The team will provide leadership on other cross-cutting water issues outside of the Water Vision, but has and will continue to be key in supporting and coordinating work on the Water Vision.

Vision Implementation Team: This team provides oversight and direction for the process. The scope includes recommending and managing multiple venues for agencies, organizations, tribes, and the public to provide input on the vision, goals and problem statement, and organizing other feedback approaches to support various phases of the vision process as they emerge. Members of this team are from the Department, OWEB, DEQ and Oregon Consensus.

IV. Phase I:

One tenant of the IWRS is to move forward in an inclusive and collaborative fashion. Development of the 100-Year Water Vision will take a similar approach, broadly engaging Oregonians in the process. Staff from multiple agencies will be needed to make this process a success, providing expertise along the way as documents and data are prepared for broader engagement.

This will be a public process, and the latest information will be available at www.OregonWaterVision.org. This website will house the vision, problem statement and other materials as they become available. Interested parties can sign up to the listserve to stay apprised of the latest meetings and other information. During the fall, the State will be listening, learning, and gathering information broadly from stakeholders and partners to help operationalize the ideas and approaches outlined in the IWRS (see page 2 of Attachment 1). Throughout the fall, the Vision Implementation Team will be designing a number of ways for Oregonians to provide information, thoughts and feedback about the vision, problem statement, and goals.

V. Summary

As highlighted in Oregon's 2017 Integrated Water Resources Strategy, Oregon's water infrastructure has served us well, but is showing its age. Oregon's water future is already being shaped by climate and population changes. We have underinvested in the new natural and built systems necessary to meet the needs of a vibrant 21st century Oregon. The Water Vision effort seeks to catalyze action to reshape our course.

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The information we gather this fall will help to chart the best path forward. The Department will continue to provide periodic updates to the Commission on the Water Vision efforts.

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Attachments:

1. Oregon's 100-Year Water Vision handout

Oregon's 100-Year Water Vision: Preparing a Secure, Safe & Resilient Water Future for All Oregonians

Vision

To address changes in climate and population dynamics, Oregon will steward its water resources to ensure clean and abundant water for our people, our economy and our environment, now and for future generations. Strategic investments will result in resilient natural and built water systems across the state to support safe and healthy communities, vibrant local economies and a healthy environment.

Premise

Many areas of Oregon are known for clean and reliable water. This is due to both favorable climate and the infrastructure we built in the 19th and 20th centuries to effectively move water from its source to where it is used. As has been identified in Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy, three forces combine to place significant stress on Oregon's water: 1) climate change and associated increases in fire, drought and flooding, 2) a half century of underinvestment in built and natural water infrastructure, and 3) our changing population and associated development – growing in some areas, shrinking in others. These factors impact the quality and quantity of water for our communities, including water in our rivers, lakes, reservoirs and aquifers. Simply put, if we are not willing to roll up our sleeves and work together to invest in our natural and built water systems, we place the safety of our communities, the health of our people and environment, and Oregon's economic future at risk.

Goals

- **Health:** Secure, safe, accessible, and healthy water for current and future Oregonians.
- **Economy:** Adequate and clean ground and surface water to support economic vitality for all Oregonians.
- **Environment:** Adequate cool, clean water for native fish and wildlife to thrive, and healthy watersheds that can store and filter water naturally.
- **Safety:** Resilient water supply and flood protection systems that can face natural hazards like earthquakes, floods and drought.

Problem Statement

Oregon's water infrastructure has served us well, but is showing its age. We have underinvested in natural and built infrastructure to meet current challenges and have not adapted systems to meet the needs of a vibrant Oregon for the next 100 years.

- ✓ Without modern water supply systems and water conservation approaches that combine to provide reliable access to water, including in emergencies, Oregonians risk not having water available when it's needed for healthy people and communities, food production, and a thriving economy.
- ✓ Without resilient built and natural infrastructure that provides cool and clean water across all Oregon watersheds, our people – and our fish and wildlife – are increasingly vulnerable to the health risks associated with lack of access to adequate, clean water.
- ✓ Without upgraded levees, dams, stormwater systems, tide gates and the natural protection of wetlands and estuaries, our communities will be less safe and at increased risk of damage and economic hardship from localized and catastrophic flooding.
- ✓ Without access to relevant water data for effective decision-making, cross-agency coordination, and intentional approaches to test new ideas, built and natural water systems will perennially fall short of providing for Oregon's in-stream and out-of-stream water needs.
- ✓ Without strong capacity across all Oregon communities to plan for their water future, and effective ways to ensure strategic water investment decisions are coordinated across and between local, regional, state and federal agencies, communities will not be prepared to take advantage of large-scale water infrastructure funding opportunities or collaborative and innovative partnerships.
- ✓ Without coordinated built and natural water infrastructure investments, Oregonians - including those in disproportionately impacted and rural communities – may be unable to access adequate clean water and return it to our rivers for downstream users, fish, and wildlife.

Our Shared Water Future

Oregon's water future is already being shaped by climate and population changes. How we choose to steward our water resources now will determine if we pass a legacy of clean and abundant water to future generations of Oregonians so they can enjoy a vibrant economy and live in a quality environment. The investments we make now in natural and built water infrastructure will support a prosperous Oregon in the 21st century and beyond.

How can I engage and provide feedback on Oregon's draft 100-Year Water Vision?

The 100-Year Water Vision and the 1-page summary are in very early draft stages. We are looking for broad feedback to better understand if the information in the summary reflects how organizations across Oregon view the state's water infrastructure challenges. To provide feedback on the draft, this fall and winter, the Governor's Natural Resources Office and state agencies will be listening, learning, and gathering information about the 100-Year Water Vision and its associated goals and problem statements, while engaging leaders across the state to learn more about water in Oregon. In addition, we'll be working to increase our understanding of data and gaps, and funding coordination needs to prepare for future funding requests. The objectives for this fall include:

- Refine the draft vision, problem statement and goals as appropriate from feedback received
- Increase awareness by water leaders of the context around the 100-Year Water Vision and its goals, including examples
- Building on the Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS), increase understanding of available data and gaps in data related to current surface and groundwater condition, as well as built and natural water infrastructure conditions and needs
- Building on the IWRS, increase identification of priority data needs for effective built and natural water infrastructure decision-making
- Increase knowledge of current state and federal funding available for water system investments and funding gaps

Ways to Engage

- ✓ **Website:** Get the latest information at OregonWaterVision.org. This website will have continued updates on State efforts to gather feedback this fall and winter.
- ✓ **Share your thoughts:** While you are at the site, share your thoughts about the 100-Year Water Vision through the feedback link.
- ✓ **Technical Workshops:** Provide your expertise to help state agencies better define what we know and gaps in knowledge around natural and built water infrastructure, current surface and groundwater condition, and funding, through a series of technical workshops.
- ✓ **Water Academies:** Engage in shared learning with water leaders in and outside of Oregon about the vision's four major goal areas (Health, Safety, Environment, and Economy), the history of water in Oregon, and how all the major pieces tie together. Academies will be held across Oregon and available via webinar and/or recordings for those unable to join in person.
- ✓ **Interviews:** While the actions above are in progress, the State is partnering with Oregon Consensus to conduct neutral interviews with a broad range of organizations who have an interest in Oregon's water future, as well as tribes and local governments.

All of these approaches will help us better understand challenges and opportunities related to Oregon's Water Vision and will provide suggestions to ensure the Vision adequately and equitably reflects the diverse interests of Oregonians.

Contact us: If you would like to schedule a meeting or have suggestions for the Water Vision, email Meta Loftsgaarden - meta.loftsgaarden@oregon.gov.