



## 2025 Utility Leadership Conference and 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting **Making the Business Case for Clean Water: Solutions for Uncertain Times**

July 22 - 25 | Cheyenne Mountain Resort | Colorado Springs, CO

*All meetings are on the Conference level unless otherwise noted.*

Δ Board of Directors Committee

*As of July 1, 2025*

### **Tuesday, July 22**

*Morning*

**9:00 – 1:00**

*White River Ballroom*

**Women's Water Network Forum** *(Optional - Separate Registration Required)*

**11:45 – 1:45**

*Shoshoni Room*

**Executive Committee Meeting and Lunch Δ**

*Afternoon*

**2:00 – 4:30**

*Conference Level  
Foyer*

**Registration**

**2:30 – 5:00**

*Colorado Ballroom*

**Committee Discussion Sessions**

All Conference attendees are welcome to attend the committee meetings, whether or not they are members of the committee.

**2:30 – 3:30**

*Colorado Ballroom*

**Water Quality Committee**

As the new Administration makes its mark at EPA, the Committee will explore key water quality challenges across the country, including areas where NACWA members might be able to move the needle with the shift in federal leadership. The Committee will discuss the current PFAS landscape and recently proposed but not finalized water quality standards, nutrient management, bacteria, the role of integrated planning and more.

*Committee Leaders*

**Martin Griffin**, *Co-Chair, Water Quality Committee*

Director of Ecosystem Services

Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District | Madison, WI

**Jamie Heisig-Mitchell**, *Co-Chair, Water Quality Committee*

Chief of Water Quality

Hampton Roads Sanitation District | Virginia Beach, VA

**3:30 – 4:00**

**Networking Break**

**4:00 – 5:00**

*Colorado Ballroom*

**Legal Affairs Committee**

From federal grant cancellations and PFAS liability to new digital accessibility requirements, Supreme Court rulings, and everything in between, clean water utility lawyers have a lot on their plates. The Legal Affairs Committee will be discussing

some of the most pressing issues facing utilities today and sharing insights on what you – and NACWA – can be doing to tackle them!

*Committee Leaders*

**Devon Goodrich**, *Co-Chair, Legal Affairs Committee*

Senior Counsel, Environmental Law Division

New York City Department of Law | New York, NY

**Emily Jackson**, *Co-Chair, Legal Affairs Committee*

Chief Legal Officer

Metro Water Recovery | Denver, CO

*Evening*

**5:00 – 6:00**

**Registration**

*Cheyenne Courtyard,*

*Lower Level*

**5:30 – 6:30**

**Welcoming Happy Hour**

*Cheyenne Courtyard,* Kick off the *Conference* by joining us at the Welcoming Happy Hour. Connect with fellow attendees, rekindle old connections, and network in a relaxed atmosphere.

*Lower Level*

Happy Hour is open to all so enjoy a quick bite and meet us there!

**Wednesday, July 23**

*Morning*

**7:30 – 9:00**

**Award Committee Meeting and Breakfast A**

*Shoshoni Room*

**9:00 – 11:30**

**Registration**

*Conference Level*

*Foyer*

**9:00 – 10:00**

**Spouse & Guest Lounge**

*Remington I,*

*Main Level*

**9:00 – 5:00**

**NACWA Networking Lounge**

*Remington II,*

*Main Level*

The lounge provides an opportunity to connect with your peers during the conference.

**9:30 – 12:00**

**Committee Discussion Sessions**

*Colorado Ballroom*

All Conference attendees are welcome to attend the committee meetings, whether or not they are members of the committee.

**9:30 – 10:30**

**Biosolids Management Committee Discussion**

*Colorado Ballroom*

The Committee will discuss recent federal actions and how delays on the PFAS front at the national level are continuing to give states the "green light" to develop their own policies, whether practical or not. The Committee will provide updates on NACWA's conversations with the Administration on EPA's draft biosolids risk assessment and the Association's development of a "choose your own adventure" legislative playbook for utilities to use at the state level.

*Committee Leaders*

**Kurt Fremont**, *Co-Chair, Biosolids Management Committee*

Division Manager, Business Operations

City of Tacoma, Environmental Services Department | Tacoma, WA

**Brent Herring**, *Co-Chair, Biosolids Management Committee*

Deputy Director

KC Water | Kansas City, MO

*Guest Speaker*

**Amanda Berger**, National PFAS Lead  
Arcadis | Cary, NC

**10:30 – 11:00**

### Networking Break

**11:00 – 12:00**

*Colorado Ballroom*

### Communication & Public Affairs Committee

Join us for a focused and energizing Committee meeting as we reflect on key takeaways from this year's Strategic Communications: H2O Workshop. Also, learn more about NACWA's national communications initiative aimed at elevating the visibility and influence of and trust in public clean water utilities.

*Committee Leaders*

**Bess McCoy**, Co-Chair, Communications & Public Affairs Committee  
Manager of Public Affairs  
Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District | St. Louis, MO

**Jeannie Smith**, Co-Chair, Communications & Public Affairs Committee  
Director of Administration & External Affairs  
Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District | Cleveland, OH

*Guest Speaker*

**Mack Bradley**, President  
StandPoint Public Affairs | St. Louis, MO

*Afternoon*

**12:00 – 2:30**

### Lunch on Your Own

**12:15 – 2:00**

*White River Ballroom*

### Optional Lunch – Hosted by the Water Collaborative Delivery Association: **Better Projects, Together: Organizational Readiness for Collaborative Delivery Success** (Free; Separate RSVP Required)

Is your utility ready to deliver a successful collaborative delivery project? Similar to other types of water sector innovation, utilities are at various levels of maturity with respect to their experience with collaborative delivery and successful project implementation. Recent research to identify and address critical utility readiness factors driving collaborative delivery implementation success found that readiness factors can be grouped into the three categories of people, processes, and tools. Join the Water Collaborative Delivery Association for a free lunch session to learn more about how utilities can prepare, assess, and align to address readiness gaps for successful collaborative delivery project implementation. All attendees will receive a copy of WCDA's *Water and Wastewater Collaborative Delivery Handbook, 6th Edition*.

Please complete [this form](#) by **July 7** to RSVP for this event.

**2:00 – 4:30**

*Conference Level  
Foyer*

### Registration

**2:30 – 5:00**

*Colorado Ballroom*

### Committee Discussion Sessions

All Conference attendees are welcome to attend the committee meetings, whether or not they are members of the committee.

**2:30 – 3:30**

*Colorado Ballroom*

### Environmental Justice Committee Discussion

Amidst the federal rollback of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives and growing political resistance to DEI and environmental justice (EJ) programs, the clean water community is facing a pivotal moment regarding its engagement on EJ. The

Committee will explore how utilities are upholding their EJ commitments and pivoting their strategies to continue serving their communities despite the current pushback and diminishment or elimination of funding sources.

*Committee Leaders*

**Sharise Horne**, *Co-Chair, Environmental Justice Committee*

Chief of Equity & Community Partnerships

Louisville & Jefferson County Metropolitan Sewer District | Louisville, KY

**Emanuel Briggs**, *Co-Chair, Environmental Justice Committee*

Director, Community Affairs

DC Water | Washington, DC

**3:30 – 4:00**

**Networking Break**

**4:00 – 5:00**

*Colorado Ballroom*

**Utility & Resource Management Committee Discussion**

Join us for an in-depth conversation on the status of federal funding, including the State Revolving Funds, WIFIA, and earmarks, and how utilities are navigating this uncertainty amid all the management and budget pressures they face.

*Committee Leader*

**Nathan Qualls**, *Co-Chair, Utility & Resource Management Committee*

Executive Director

NEW Water | Green Bay, WI

*Speakers*

**Andrew Sawyers**, Director, Office of Wastewater Management

US Environmental Protection Agency | Washington, DC

**Anthony Kane**, President and Chief Executive Officer

Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure | Washington, DC

*Evening*

**6:00 – 7:30**

*Centennial Ballroom,  
Main Level*

**Awards Ceremony & Reception**

Join us for a celebratory evening honoring exceptional NACWA utility facilities for their outstanding achievements in compliance, and individuals for their unmeasured service to NACWA. Following the Ceremony, we invite you to join your colleagues in celebrating the evening's honorees at the Awards Reception.

**Thursday, July 24**

*Morning*

**8:30 – 11:30**

*Conference Level  
Foyer*

**Registration**

**9:00 – 10:00**

*Remington I,  
Main Level*

**Spouse & Guest Lounge**

**9:00 – 5:00**

*Remington II,  
Main Level*

**NACWA Networking Lounge**

The lounge provides an opportunity to connect with your peers during the conference.

**9:00 – 11:40**

*Colorado Ballroom*

**Plenary Session I**

9:00 – 9:15

### Opening Remarks

**Mickey Conway**, NACWA President  
Chief Executive Officer  
Metro Water Recovery | Denver, CO

### Welcoming Remarks

**Somer Mese**, Chief Operations Officer  
Colorado Springs Utilities | Colorado Springs, CO

9:15 – 10:15

### Keynote

#### From Complexity to Clarity: Setting the Standard for Systems Thinking Practice and Science

Explore the science of Systems Thinking and how our minds naturally organize information in ways that mirror systems found in nature. Discover how human cognition functions not in isolation, but as part of the natural world. Recognized by the World Economic Forum as a top future job skill and by Forbes as a vital leadership competency, Systems Thinking is and will be essential for navigating complex challenges today and in the future.

#### Introductory Remarks

**Leisa Thompson**, NACWA Board Member  
General Manager  
Metropolitan Council Environmental Services | Saint Paul, MN

#### Keynote Speaker

**Laura Cabrera**, Professor  
Cornell University | Ithaca, NY

10:15 – 10:30

### Networking Break

10:30 – 11:30

#### Success in Uncertainty: Leadership, Systems Thinking, and the Future-Ready Utility

Uncertainty is becoming the new normal for clean water utilities who are on the front lines delivering exceptional environmental and public health protection 24/7/365. Whether it's shifting regulations, workforce changes, extreme weather or emerging contaminants, with the right mindset and tools, these challenges can become opportunities for leaders to re-think how the work gets done. Through real-world examples and candid discussion, speakers will share how they are turning uncertainty into opportunity, building more resilient organizations, and delivering lasting improvements for the communities they serve.

#### Moderator

**Pam Elardo**, Vice President of Strategic Services  
Brown and Caldwell | Seattle, WA

#### Panelists

**Leisa Thompson**, NACWA Board Member

**Heidi Dexheimer**, Deputy Director  
City of Henderson | Henderson, NV

**Tim Ruggaber**, Founder and Principal  
HydroDigital | South Bend, IN

**Laura Cabrera**, Cornell University

11:30 – 11:45

### Closing Keynote

#### Top Priorities from the US EPA Office of Water

Hear key priorities from US EPA's Office of Water and the direction this Administration is taking that will have impacts on the clean water community in the years ahead.

**11:45 – 12:00**

*Colorado Ballroom*

### **Annual Association Business Meeting**

- Report of the President
- Report of the Treasurer
- Proposed *Bylaws* Amendment
- Election of Directors
- Report of the Chief Executive Officer

*Afternoon*

**12:00 – 3:00**

### **Lunch on Your Own**

**12:15 – 2:45**

*White River Ballroom*

### **Board of Directors Meeting Δ**

**2:30 – 4:30**

*Conference Level  
Foyer*

### **Registration**

**3:00 – 5:15**

*Colorado Ballroom*

### **Plenary Session II**

**3:00 – 3:02**

### **Opening Remarks**

**Mickey Conway**, NACWA President

**3:02 – 3:15**

### **Stronger Together: Managing Costs, Protecting Funding, and Building Smarter**

*Featured Speaker*

**John McCarthy**, President, Water Business Line  
Arcadis | New York, NY

**3:15 – 4:15**

### **Smarter Together: Rethinking Governance for Utility Success**

Behind every successful clean water utility is a governance model that works. Yet politics and infrastructure are interlinked – and the way clean water utilities are governed often reflects competing priorities, unclear authorities, and shifting public expectations. This panel will explore candidly how governance structures – the good and the bad – empower or inhibit progress for communities.

*Moderator*

**Charlotte Katzenmoyer**, NACWA Board Member  
Chief Executive Officer  
Capital Region Water | Harrisburg, PA

*Panelists*

**Bill Teichmiller**, Chief Executive Officer  
EJ Water Cooperative, Inc. | Dieteric, IL

**George Hawkins**, Founder and President  
Moonshot Missions | Bethesda, MD

**Andrew Sawyers**, US Environmental Protection Agency

**4:15 – 5:15**

### **Taking Care of the Heart, Brain & Engine of Our Utility: Investing in Our People**

Public wastewater utilities are at a critical juncture with close to half of the workforce eligible for retirement in the next decade. Hiring qualified staff before losing institutional knowledge is paramount and it is past time to think outside the box on how we attract, retain, and cultivate our next generation of leaders. Panelists will

share real world examples and practical tactics they are using now to help future proof their workforce and sustain their utility's mission for decades to come.

*Discussion Leader*

**Beate Wright**, Founder and Chief Executive Officer  
Wright for You, LLC | Conifer, CO

*Panelists*

**David Persinger**, General Manager  
Anchorage Water & Wastewater Utility | Anchorage, AK

**Eddie Abisaab**, Chief Operating Officer  
Hampton Roads Sanitation District | Virginia Beach, VA

**Kevin Shafer**, Executive Director  
Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District | Milwaukee, WI

**5:15**

**Closing Remarks**

*Evening*

**6:00 – 7:00**

*Beach Pavilion*

**President's Reception**

Please join us at the outdoor Beach Pavilion to celebrate President Mickey Conway! Enjoy the breathtaking views of the Mountains.

**Friday, July 25**

*Morning*

**9:00 – 10:30**

*Conference Level  
Foyer*

**Registration**

**9:30 – 11:30**

*Colorado Ballroom*

**Plenary Session III**

**9:30 – 9:32**

**Opening Remarks**

**9:32 – 10:30**

**When the Going Gets Tough, the Tough Get Going:  
Making the Business Case for Clean Water**

This year's conference theme hits home – with shrinking federal budgets, infrastructure that is aging, increasing regulatory requirements, and experienced workers who are exiting, we are definitely in uncertain times. So how do you make the business case that clean water solutions aren't just necessary, but more than worth the investment? This panel brings together private sector leaders to share how they are helping utilities stay resilient by making a strong, clear business case for clean water.

*Moderator*

**Laura Briefer**, NACWA Treasurer 2025-2026  
Director of Public Utilities  
Salt Lake City Corporation | Salt Lake City, UT

*Panelists*

**Beverley Stinson**, Executive Vice President, Global Water Business Line Leader  
AECOM | Chelmsford, MA

**Susan Moio**, Senior Vice President and Global Water Director  
Jacobs | Reno, NV

**Daven Oswalt**, Executive Vice President and Executive Director, Water  
GFT, Inc. | Pittsburgh, PA

**Hampik Dekermenjian**, Vice President  
Hazen and Sawyer | Los Angeles, CA

**10:30 – 11:25**

### **Tech It to the Limit: From Innovation to Impact**

Technology is supposed to make things easier, but it often takes time, adaptation, and grit to get there. With today's realities, clean water utility leaders are under extreme pressure to make smart decisions and do so with less. But how do utility leaders know what technologies are best? This session dives into how forward-thinking utilities and partners are pushing past those barriers and putting new technology to work to make lasting impacts in their communities.

#### *Moderator*

**Tim Braun**, Founder  
BluTerra, LLC | Cassopolis, MI

#### *Speakers*

**Cristina Ahmadpour**, President  
Isle Utilities | Palo Alto, CA

**Liam Cavanaugh**, Deputy Chief Executive Officer/Chief Operating Officer  
Metro Water Recovery | Denver, CO

**Mahesh Lunani**, Founder and Chief Executive Officer  
AquaSight | Troy, MI

**Pieter Van Ry**, NACWA Board Member  
Director  
South Platte Renew | Englewood, CO

**11:25 – 11:30**

### **Closing Remarks**