

August 2022 Public Works Board Meeting Recap

To empower Washington communities to build and maintain sustainable infrastructure

Prepared by PWB members Lora Petso and Justin Clary

AUTHORS' NOTE

Reminder that the 2022 Traditional Program loan cycle is now OPEN. Applications will be accepted through September 9, 2022, with approximately \$115.7 million available for Construction loans and \$2.9 million for Pre-construction loans. We encourage WASWD members to apply—this is critical to continue to demonstrate PWAA need to the legislature.

CALL TO ORDER/CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Gardow called the meeting to order, roll call was conducted, and the board approved the consent agenda.

BUSINESS OF THE BOARD

Traditional Program:

The board discussed and acted on the following:

- The board **approved an emergency loan to the Consolidated Irrigation District No. 14 for \$1 million** to replace a potable water well that failed (located in Walla Walla County).
- The board **approved an emergency grant to the Town of Harrington for \$775,000** to repair a water main that has failed underlying BNSF tracks.
- The board **approved an emergency loan to the City of Palouse for \$156,000** to repair a water main that has failed.

Quarterly Budget Update:

PWB staff Cindy Chavez provided current projections for the Traditional and Broadband programs through the end of the biennium (June 30, 2023).

Decision Package Update:

PWB Executive Director Karin Berkholtz and lobbyist Marie Sullivan provided a summary of outreach efforts with stakeholders and legislators regarding the PWB request for \$425 million Traditional Program spending authority in the 2023-25 biennium. Feedback has been positive regarding the request amount, which is predicated on the sunset of PWAA revenue diversions in 2023.

PWB staff Jason Freeze provided an update on Communications Committee efforts, which are focused on updating informational products, which should be ready for review soon.

Following discussion, the board **affirmed a decision package request for \$425 million for the Traditional Program and \$306,000 for Infrastructure Equity Dashboard and Mapping during the 2023-25 biennium.**

PWB-Commerce Memorandum of Understanding:

Commerce Managing Director Chris McCord provided the status on update of the MOU between the PWB and Commerce. The MOU has been reviewed by the Executive Committee, with the goal of the document being forwarded to the entire board the week of August 8. Comments are requested by August 26 so that the MOU may be considered during the September PWB meeting.

WORK SESSION

2022 PWB Retreat—PWB Executive Director Berkholtz presented the tentative schedule for the PWB’s October retreat in Everett, as well as the preliminary results of an online survey conducted with board members.

INFORMATION ITEMS AND UPDATES

Department of Commerce Update—Mark Barkley, Commerce Assistant Director, provided an update on Department of Commerce activities. Ensuring equity remains key in Commerce’s development of decision packages, as well as identifying means of supporting small/rural communities in the management/administration of loans and grants (considering how ARPA/IIJA funds may be used to assist those communities). Commerce also continues to track interest rates—with the cost of financing going up, low interest loans will be even more crucial for local governments in financing critical infrastructure projects.

PWB Policies Directory—PWB staff Ava Gombosky presented how to navigate the recently created [PWB Policies Directory](#).

Innovative Infrastructure Project Update—PWB staff Maria Jawad provided an update on the innovative infrastructure pilot recommendations, which will be provided to the board for consideration of approval during the September PWB meeting. Board discussion included creation of a separate program (like the Broadband Program) or inclusion of innovative infrastructure criteria within the Traditional Program, and funding source (e.g., PWAA or other state/federal funds).