



Joint Toxic Contaminants Workgroup & Local Leadership Workgroup Meeting

Oct 21, 2025

9:00 - 11:15 AM

[Visit the meeting webpage for meeting materials and additional information](#)

Purpose: A collaborative meeting between the Local Leadership and Toxic Contaminants Workgroups to identify technical and policy challenges, needs, and opportunities surrounding PFAS from the local government perspective; identify resources, tools, and data available to aid local governments, and by extension state and federal governments, in PFAS management; and strengthen the network between the Toxic Contaminants and Local Leadership Workgroup.

Minutes

I. Welcome

Overview: Rick Mittler welcomed participants and kicked off the meeting. Les Knapp shared the meeting objectives and shared an overview of the agenda. Les and Tony Timpano each gave an introduction of their workgroup's purpose, work, and membership.

Presenter: Les Knapp, Tony Timpano & Rick Mittler

II. TCW PFAS Primer - *Non decisional*

Overview: Toxic Contaminants Workgroup (TCW) members shared their perspectives on key challenges and opportunities for state and local governments to collaborate on PFAS policy and management, as well as what they hope to learn from the LLWG to strengthen and support local governments' efforts to address PFAS and other toxic contaminants.

Presenter: Tony Timpano & TCW Members

Key Points:

- VA DEQ: Tony Timpano, TCW Co-Chair
 - General challenges include consistency across monitoring, assessment, setting thresholds, etc. and getting information to the people who need it.

- VA DEQ: Robert (Max) Wheeler
 - Highlight PFAS-related work focused on ambient monitoring for fish tissue in water columns across the state and making it available to anyone with interest through a [PFAS Sampling Dashboard](#).
 - Tasked by General Assembly to identify PFAS sources in drinking water, and have authority to ask dischargers to sample their effluent for PFAS to help identify sources.
 - Shared [Great Lakes PFAS Summit](#) on December 2-4, 2025.
- Chesapeake Bay Commission: Adrienne Kotula
 - Held a recent discussion with stakeholders on PFAS in biosolids legislation, including nonprofit environmental groups, municipal wastewater manufacturers, agricultural interests, and others. Foresee legislation moving forward in 2026 on sampling for PFAS in biosolids and a state methodology to do so.
- DNREC: John Cargill
 - DNREC is evaluating PFAS levels in a variety of media, including drinking water, surface and ground water, fish tissue, and now biosolids and wastewater too.
 - Challenges include lack of criteria for many media so managing PFAS through permitting activities is difficult and regulation not keeping up with technical knowledge.
 - Another challenge is public awareness and education. A recent statewide survey in Delaware showed about 45% of residents don't know what PFAS is or do not care. Education and outreach are key places for collaboration with LLWG.

III. LLWG PFAS Primer - *Non decisional*

Overview: Local Leadership Workgroup (LLWG) members shared their perspectives on key challenges and opportunities within their jurisdiction or from local governments in their network to collaborate on PFAS policy and management, as well as what they hope to learn from the TCW to strengthen and support local governments' efforts to address PFAS and other toxic contaminants.

Presenter: Les Knapp & LLWG Members

Key Points:

- MD DE: Les Knapp, Chair for LLWG
 - Issues identifying source of PFAS
 - Smaller local governments face challenges with biosolid land applications, especially concerning contaminated farmland.
 - [MDE Developed PFAS Action Plan](#)
 - Response to [Protecting State Waters from PFAS Pollution Act](#)

- MD is developing/ implementing a holistic approach to testing wastewater systems in hopes to identify remedial steps and treatment options.
 - The biggest challenge to this progress is finding the money to do the testing and implementing best practices.
- VA Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission: Michelle Edwards, biosolids remains the largest issue, especially when it comes to available data for local governments and the public
- West Virginia - Region 9 Planning and Development Council: Josephine Saikali, The largest push right now would be environmental outreach.
- PA DEP: Megan Lehman, Growing concern over PFAS levels found in sewage sludge, firefighting foam, and drinking water. The biggest challenge currently is funding.
 - [North Centre Township HSCA Investigation](#)
- LGAC Coordinator, PA Resident: Laura Cattell Noll, Concerns over PFAS levels were addressed at a recent DNREC meeting. Examined source of contaminants, its impacts on drinking water, and funding issues.
 - DNREC Points of contact: Don Phillips, Jim Sullivan

IV. Group Discussion (Breakout Rooms & Report Outs) - *Non decisional*

Overview: Through a combination of breakout rooms and full group discussions, attendees explored opportunities for collaboration, addressed challenges identified, and networked across workgroups and jurisdictional boundaries to support local governments in addressing PFAS and other toxic contaminants.

Presenters: Les Knapp (MD), Tony Timpano (VA), Laura Cattell Noll (PA & NY), John Cargill (DE), Nick Murray (WV)

Actions:

1. LLWG and TCW will explore opportunities to develop PFAS and Toxic Contaminants-focused educational materials for use by local government leaders to enhance their personal and constituent knowledge.
2. LLWG and TCW will work to update and enhance the “[Your Health and the Environment](#)” learning module on [Protect Local Waterways](#) to ensure it reflects the most updated science and understandings around toxic contaminants.

Breakout Room Report Outs: [Link for Full Breakout Room Report Outs](#)

MD:

- Challenges:
 - More research
 - Public misunderstanding of PFAS
 - Source Identification

- Funding
- Opportunities:
 - [Pooled monitoring program from CBT](#) to address additional research needs
 - More public outreach campaigns
 - Md has impaired water quality monitoring done under industrial stormwater permitting
 - Additional guidance from EPA at the federal level - specifically on standards of PFAS levels in different media (e.g. surface water)

VA:

- Challenges:
 - Un- and under-informed public and stakeholders; in the same vein, issue with fear paralyzing action at the legislative and citizen level
 - Balance of creating and establishing regulation while also recognizing new and updated research and data
 - More research needs to be done in general and standards need to be set
- Opportunities:
 - Data transparency and having the data be easily accessible for officials and public
 - TCW can work with LLWG's to address the needs and priorities to focus research on within each jurisdiction

PA & NY:

- Challenges:
 - Access to laboratories for testing
 - Cost of testing for private wells; high volume of individuals in PA are on private wells not public water systems
 - Biosolid applications on private property, where access to testing and mitigation is more challenging.
 - Determining responsible party for contamination and subsequently cleanup
- Opportunities:
 - Standardized science & regulation
 - Clarity on sources and responsibility
 - Public outreach and awareness

DE:

- Challenges:
 - Balance between spreading the word and providing education while not spreading fear at the same time
- Opportunities:
 - Giving private landowners/ public actionable items to keep themselves and their community safe
 - Opportunity for parameters and regulators to be on the same page (opposing opinions and priorities is recognized as a challenge)

Discussion: (from reportout conversations and the meeting chat)

- Ruth Berlin (chat): How are states dealing with the current EPA effort to alter the OECD definition of PFAS that eliminates about 50% of PFAS as defined by OECD? [PFAS pesticides specifically]
 - Working on a bill in Maryland and had to kill it in the last session since the industry changed the definition of PFAS. EPA is trying to change the definition now, so it only covers half of what is considered PFAS. It's really a redefinition across the board.
 - Tony Timpano: Not familiar with this issue specifically, but given the large number of individual compounds, there needs to be prioritization on ones that are more concerning to focus on. There is also the general issue of reconciling information across jurisdictions.
 - Ruth: We need to deal with PFAS as a class and need to discuss PFAS as causing cancer, not just linked to it.
 - Laura Cattell Noll (chat): The changing scientific, regulatory and funding landscape makes it extremely challenging for local governments to address the toxic contaminants issues that they are seeing locally.
- Rick Mittler (verbal): Reminded folks of the protect local waterways resources, particularly '[Your Health and the Environment](#)' which has a focus on PFAS
- Les Knapp (verbal): What is being done internationally/at levels above where local leaders work? A lot of products are coming from overseas. How to address new sources from products?
 - Tony Timpano (Verbal response): Not sure, but source identification is a major part of this. Need more research on sources and funding for it.
 - George Onyullo (Verbal response): PFAS in drinking water discussion last week, there has to be a way for surface water to work with drinking water – need collaboration
- Les Knapp (Verbal): What can our two workgroups do to assist your local gov with PFAS?
 - John Cargill, DNREC (Verbal response): Work together on simple written outreach materials (e.g. pamphlets, one-pagers) to help information be disseminated in a consistent way across the bay and build trust from having multiple groups with the same messaging.
 - Michelle Edwards, RRRC (Verbal response): Need educational materials for the public and for elected officials, who have different needs. Updating the PLW module for officials and pamphlets for the public. Research on best practices happening in other states and getting it in writing to move forward on those questions.

- Tony Timpano (Verbal response): Fish consumption and drinking water info to the public.
- George Onyullo (Verbal response): We have very good precedent for what we went through with PCB fish consumption advisories, we can draw on that for making advisories for PFASs.
- Maura Christian (Verbal response): Being in the breakout rooms was so valuable. Would recommend more state-specific groupings together.
- Les Knapp (Verbal): Funding was a consistent challenge. Any sources in the face of lack of federal funding? We've looked into it in Maryland, but it's daunting.
 - George Onyullo (Verbal response): If this group can define data needs behind PFAS then we can mobilize on it. We can't wait for funding to come to drive where we look.
 - Marel King (chat): Maybe have the state agencies that manage SRF\$ discuss the availability and limitations of that funding source? In PA, PENNVEST has provided some funding for PFAS mitigation.
- Tony Timpano (verbal): STAC has a list of science priorities for helping guide needed research. TCW may help expand or update that list.
 - Petra Baldwin (chat): [STAC report](#) on Improving Understanding and Coordination of Science Activities for PFAS in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

V. Joint Meeting Discussion Wrap Up - *Non decisional*

Overview: Les and Tony wrapped up the group discussion, sharing key takeaways and potential next steps for collaboration. Rick Mittler shared the [Networking and Collaboration Follow-up Request Form](#) with both workgroup members to connect with people and build upon the conversations from the meeting.

Presenters: Les Knapp & Tony Timpano

Actions:

1. Members of both the TCW & LLWG to fill out the [Networking & Collaboration form](#) by November 12, 2025. There is a [Word version](#) of the form posted to the meeting page, should individuals not be able to access the google form. Please send in all responses to Rick Mittler, Tony Timpano, Petra Baldwin, and Erin Sonnenburg by Oct 31, 2025.

VI. LLWG Business Meeting) - *Non decisional*

Presenter: Les Knapp

Overview:

- LLWG Year in Review
- LLWG 2026 Meeting Topics
- Announcement and Introduction to 2026 Vice Chair

Actions:

1. LLWG members to fill out [Mentimeter](#) on 2026 meeting topics by Nov 12, 2025.

Key Points:

LLWG Year In Review:

- Updating the LL Outcome
 - New LLWG Name: Local Government Leadership Workgroup
 - Justification: To more clearly convey that our efforts are focused on local government leaders
 - New Outcome Language: Increase the knowledge and support the capacity of local government leaders in decision-making, such as land use planning, to implement local actions that advance the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement.
 - Justification: A specific reference was made to land use planning and the critical role local governments play in that. However, the overall goal remains the same of increasing the knowledge and capacity of local officials.
 - New Target Language:
 - Engage directly (e.g., roundtable discussions) with at least 400 local government leaders annually.
 - Engage indirectly (e.g., newsletters) with at least 4,000 local government leaders annually.
 - Justification:
 - We plan to use our management strategy and workplan to more explicitly define what direct and indirect engagement is.
 - These numbers have been tracked by the Coordinator since 2019 and those were used to determine these targets.
 - We hope to spend time at future quarterly meetings to better quantify if these direct and indirect engagements are leading to actions taken by local governments.
- [Peer to Peer Tours](#)
 - [Virginia: Clean and Green Growth](#)
 - [Pennsylvania:](#)
 - Collaborating on Natural Resource Management
 - Intermunicipal Collaboration for Clean Water

- Upcoming Tour: Nov 7, 2025 in Prince George's County, Maryland on Stormwater Infrastructure
- [Get Involved!](#)
- Technical Assistance Inventory Gap Analysis
 - Contracted out to [EPIC](#)
 - 142 Entities & TA programs identified across the CBW states through interviews, responses to the collection tool, and desktop analysis.
 - Initial Findings:
 - Most providers juggle multiple roles and dedicate only part of their time to technical assistance
 - Most providers engage more than 20 local governments annually, yet the sheer number and varying capacity of local governments across Bay states create challenges for equitable delivery and sustained support.
 - A specific community that is not receiving TA from their research are Tribal Nations and Indigenous People
 - Technical assistance is strongest around water quality, BMPs, and stewardship. However, there are notable gaps in areas such as blue crabs, oysters, toxic contaminants, and in technical fields like engineering, IT, and applied research.
- Updates to [Protect Your Local Waterways Website](#)
 - Highlights:
 - Over 1000 unique visitors to the site
 - Fact sheets and powerpoints have been downloaded over 100 times
 - In 2025, the LLWG Coordinator and Staffer reviewed the existing case studies for "[Preserving Local Character and Landscapes](#)" and will be providing updates in the following months.
 - This same review process will be followed for the TC module "[Your Health and the Environment](#)"

LLWG 2026 Meeting Topics:

- The LLWG shared a mentimeter tool to collect LLWG member feedback on topics for the 2026 calendar.
- Top 2026 meeting topics selected during the October 21 2025 meeting:
 - Communicating Water Quality Progress to Local Officials
 - Septic Systems & Small/ Rural Wastewater Management
 - Tree Cover Status and Change
 - Flooding and Stormwater

Attendance:

- ❖ Adrienne Kotula (CBC)
- ❖ Amanda Shaver (VA DEQ)
- ❖ Allison Welch (CRC)
- ❖ Andrew Heyes
- ❖ Kofi Asante (DOEE)
- ❖ Bailey Rocco (PML)
- ❖ Petra Baldwin (CRC)
- ❖ Douglas Bell (EPA)
- ❖ Charles Brown (EPA)
- ❖ Caitlin Bolton (MWCOG)
- ❖ John G. Cargill IV (DNREC)
- ❖ Maura Christian (VA DEQ)
- ❖ Daniel Koval (CRC)
- ❖ Don Phillips (LGAC)
- ❖ Douglas Griffith (Anne Arundel Co)
- ❖ Ellen Egen (Aqua Law)
- ❖ Randy Farmerie (PA DEP)
- ❖ Robert Wheeler (VA DEQ)
- ❖ Janet Thigpen (STC Planning)
- ❖ Jess Blackburn (ACB)
- ❖ Paul Hlavinka (MDE)
- ❖ Phoebe Murrell (Elizabeth River Project)
- ❖ Rick Mittler (ACB)
- ❖ Jen Cotting (UMD EFC)
- ❖ Josephine Saikali (WV Region 9 Planning and Development Council)
- ❖ Kayli Ottomanelli (ACB)
- ❖ KC Filippino (HRPDC)
- ❖ Laura Cattell Noll (LGAC)
- ❖ Megan Lehman (PADEP)
- ❖ Les Knapp (MDE)
- ❖ Abdolhossain Liaghat (PADEP)
- ❖ Maggie Woodward (CBC)
- ❖ Marel King (CBC)
- ❖ Marisa Baldine (ACB)
- ❖ Michelle Edwards (RRRC)
- ❖ Mitchell Smiley (VML)
- ❖ Nick Murray (WVDEP)
- ❖ George Onyullo (DC DOEE)
- ❖ Pam Shellenberger (YCPC)
- ❖ Ruth Berlin (MPEN)
- ❖ Sakinat Ahmad (DNREC)
- ❖ Erin Sonnenburg (CRC)
- ❖ James C. Sullivan (DNREC)
- ❖ Tony Timpano (DEQ)
- ❖ Wendy Walsh (USC)