*Association of Clean Water Administrators*

# 2026 National NPDES Program Efficiency Workshop

Virtual Meeting
November 4 – 6, 2026

**PURPOSE**

The 2026 National NPDES Program Efficiency Workshop supports implementation of EPA and state NPDES permitting programs nationwide by highlighting administrative efficiencies, sharing best management practices, showcasing innovative state approaches, improving data quality, highlighting technologies, facilitating coregulator discussions, and identifying challenges and barriers. Program areas considered for the workshop include jurisdictional determination, permit application, public comment process, permit development, monitoring and reporting, data management, inspections, and violation/response.

**ATTENDEES**

The 2026 National NPDES Program Efficiency Workshop is a virtual meeting intended to provide for comprehensive and diverse participation. Attendees should include:

- State, interstate, territory, and EPA program managers, permit writers, data stewards, inspectors, compliance staff, and any other staff involved in NPDES program implementation
- Partnering state and federal agency staff that provide technical and/or regulatory assistance to the NPDES program
- Invited guests

SPECIAL THANKS TO INDIVIDUALS THAT COMPLETED THE PREMEETING SURVEY AND VOLUNTEERED TO PRESENT!!

# Wednesday, November 4, 2026

**This meeting is only open to States, EPA co-regulators, and invited guests. All meeting times are Eastern time zone.**

**12:00 PM – 12:15 PM**
*Plenary*

### Welcome & Opening Remarks

*Sean Rolland, Deputy Director, Association of Clean Water Administrators*
*Kevin Weiss, Office of Water, Environmental Protection Agency*

**12:15 PM – 12:45 PM**
*Plenary*

### Session 1: ACWA Survey – Is an NPDES Permit Needed?

ACWA staff will discuss a recent survey which raised broad questions regarding resources and efficiency of identifying whether a discharge requires a permit.
*Sean Rolland, Deputy Director, Association of Clean Water Administrators*

Rhode Island will highlight the processes potential dischargers can use in Rhode Island to identify whether their operations require a pollutant discharge permit.
*Heidi Travers, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management*

**12:45 PM – 1:30 PM**
*Regional Breakouts*

### Regional Break Out 1: Is an NPDES Permit Needed?

*Please join your regional breakout room for discussions. A transcription tool will be taking notes to develop a summary of recommendations after the meeting. Individual attribution will be removed.*

Q1. What resources do you most depend on for determining whether an NPDES permit is required?

Q2. Does your state currently have (or will your state consider) a separate state permitting program for current NPDES facilities that wish to leave the NPDES program due to WOTUS changes? How many facilities in your state might be impacted by an updated definition for WOTUS?

Q3. Are there resources you think the Administration (vs the State) could provide that would assist with a faster response on whether a facility needs an NPDES permit or not?

Q4. Other related discussion topics while time permits.

**1:30 PM – 2:45 PM**
*Plenary*

### Session 2: NPDES Permit Applications and Notices of Intent

Michigan will provide a demonstration of tools and business practices that facilitate the submission of complete NPDES applications and their timely processing.
*Melissa Sandborn, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy*

**2:45 PM – 3:00 PM**

### Break

**3:00 PM – 4:15 PM**
*Plenary*

### Session 3: NPDES Tools, Templates, Policies to Help Permit Writers

An overview of Iowa's use of spreadsheets to calculate water quality-based effluent limits.
*Ian Willard, Iowa Department of Natural Resources*

Iowa will present on their Microsoft Excel spreadsheet used for determining reasonable potential.
*Ben Hucka, Iowa Department of Natural Resources*

This presentation will highlight recent process improvement efforts to reduce Missouri's operating permit backlog.
*Ashley Grupe, Missouri Department of Natural Resources*

**4:15 PM – 5:00 PM**
*Regional Breakouts*

**Regional Break Out 2: Applications, NOIs, Tools, and Policies**
*Please join your regional breakout room for discussions. A transcription tool will be taking notes to develop a summary of recommendations after the meeting. Individual attribution will be removed.*

Q1. What are the biggest challenges in your state's current approach to getting to application completion?

Q2. If resources were not an obstacle, how would you use technology to further streamline application/NOI completion, review, and/or initial permit development?

Q3. In what ways would you improve communication with the permittee and the public prior to and during the draft/proposed permit phase?

Q4. Other important related discussion topics while time permits.

**5:00 PM**

**Adjourn**

## Thursday, November 5, 2026

**This meeting is only open to States, EPA co-regulators, and invited guests. All meeting times are Eastern time zone.**

**12:00 PM – 1:00 PM**
*Plenary*

**Session 4: Public Comment Collection and Review**
Presenters below will share electronic tools used in their state to help them collect feedback from the public.

*Eric Lachermyer, South Carolina Department of Environmental Services*
*ePermitting for Public Comment*

*Max Moore, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency*
*SmartComments for Public Comment*

*Rachel Tucker, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency*
*EngagementHQ (Granicus) for Public Comment*

**1:00 PM – 2:30 PM**
*Plenary*

**Session 5: Monitoring and Reporting Policy and Tools**
Arizona will share internal guidance updates designed to help permit writers establish fair and consistent monitoring requirements.
*Corin Hammond, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality*

Explanation and Demonstration of the Montana Department of Environmental Quality's New Automated Land Application Assessment Tool for CAFO Permittees.
*Luke Scannell, Montana Department of Environmental Quality*

**2:30 PM – 3:15 PM**
*Regional Breakouts*

### Regional Break Out 3: Monitoring, Reporting, and Analysis

*Please join your regional breakout room for discussions. A transcription tool will be taking notes to develop a summary of recommendations after the meeting. Individual attribution will be removed.*

Q1. What have you found to be the strongest, most compelling, argument for increased monitoring and reporting requirements in a renewed NPDES permit?

Q2. Has your state considered/implemented dynamic monitoring and reporting requirements in permits that provide flexibility based on what is found in previous monitoring periods?

Q3. Does your state have an automated process for communicating with the permittee that a monitoring/reporting deadline is approaching or has passed?

Q4. Other related discussion topics while time permits.

**3:15 PM – 3:30 PM**

### Break

**3:30 PM – 5:00 PM**
*Plenary*

### Session 6: Inspections, Data, Violations, and Response

Virginia will share information regarding their mobile inspection efforts which allows for significantly increased efficiency across inspections, near-instant delivery of results, and quick compliance resolution.
*Christoph Quasney & Zack Robinson, Virgina Department of Environmental Quality*

Michigan will highlight tools that help permittees track required actions and enable internal Department staff to monitor inspection metrics, manage tasks, and oversee compliance.
*Melissa Sandborn, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy*

**5:00 PM**

### Adjourn

## Friday, November 6, 2026

**This meeting is only open to States, EPA co-regulators, and invited guests. All meeting times are Eastern time zone.**

**12:00 PM – 1:15 PM**
*Plenary*

### Session 8: More NPDES Program Efficiencies

*Oregon DEQ Individual NPDES permit program backlog improvement and monitoring efficiency.*
*Jeff Navarro, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality*

### Roundtable Discussion:

1. Q1. Is your state considering any future programmatic/technology updates that you think will help make the NPDES program more efficient?

2. Do you have any current tools you would like to demo for your peers that would help to further contribute to this conversation?

**1:15 PM – 2:00 PM**
*Regional Breakouts*

### Regional Break Out 4: Embracing Challenges to Advance the Program

*Please join your regional breakout room for discussions. A transcription tool will be taking notes to develop a summary of recommendations after the meeting. Individual attribution will be removed.*

Q1. Where compliance history has been an issue, what types of responses and/or future permit modifications have been most successful?

Q2. Are there areas within the NPDES program where you think more prescriptive/flexible program elements would help reduce permit challenges and risk of litigation?

Q3. Are there areas related to the NPDES program where you think more research/data would help reduce/mitigate permit challenges and litigation?

Q4. Other related discussion topics while time permits.

**2:00 PM – 3:00 PM**
*Plenary*

### Session 9: How Water Utilities Can Use Innovation to Improve Performance

*Aquaspec* is an Agentic AI platform purpose-built for water and wastewater utilities that provides highly accurate predictive models and forecasting, deeply trained Mentor Agents for every critical utility role, and uses your system's real-world knowledge embedded directly into daily workflows.
*Dr. Matthew Klein, Delta Bravoc*

**3:00 PM – 3:15 PM**

### Break

**3:15 PM – 4:30 PM**
*Plenary*

### Session 10: How AI Can help Regulators

During this session South Carolina and private partners will discuss the agency's journey towards integrating current technology and plans for the future.

Moderator:

*Dr. Matthew Klein, Delta Bravo*

Panelists:

*Kelly Whitlock, South Carolina Department of Environmental Services*
*John Inniger, Delta Bravo, PermitPro*
*Balaji Narayanan, Windsor Solutions*

**4:30 PM – 5:00 PM**
*Plenary*

### Roundtable Discussions

Facilitators:

*Sean Rolland, Deputy Director, Association of Clean Water Administrators*
*Kevin Weiss, Office of Water, Environmental Protection Agency*

Q1. What resources could EPA, ACWA, or the private sector make available, or invest in, that you think would help make the NPDES program more efficient?

Q2. What topics would you like to see covered in a future ACWA meeting/webinar?

**5:00 PM**

### Adjourn