

MINUTES

JOINT WATER ADVISORY BOARD AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

JANUARY 16, 2026

**WAB MEMBERS
PRESENT:**

Senator Steve Geller, Chair
Vice Mayor Sandra Welch, Vice Chair
Councilmember Jim Allbritton
Commissioner Pamela Beasley-Pittman (10:21 a.m.)
Commissioner Doug Bell
Commissioner Kevin Biederman
Commissioner Hazelle Rogers
Commissioner Anthony Caggiano
Albert Carbon, TAC Chair
Commissioner Rhonda Eaton
Mayor Michelle J. Gomez
Vice Mayor Tom Good
Mark Peterson
Councilmember Susan Starkey

**WAB MEMBERS
ABSENT:**

Governing Board Member Ron Bergeron
Commissioner Aisha Gordon
Commissioner Denise Horland
Vice Mayor Nancy Metayer-Bowen

**TAC MEMBERS
PRESENT:**

Albert Carbon, Chair
Michael Zygnerski for Alan Garcia
Allison Witoshinsky
Brett Butler
Commissioner Doug Bell
Darren Badore
Giovanni Batista
Heather Cunniff
Isabel Cosio Carballo
Jose Lopez
Luis Ochoa
Patrick Davis
Pete Kwiatkowski
Rafael Frias
Renuka Mohammed
Rodrigo de Castro
Suzanne Mechler

**TAC MEMBERS
ABSENT:**

Talal Abi-Karam (Vice Chair)
David Walker
Alicia Joseph
Dr. Jennifer Jurado

Stephanie Pearson
Steve Holmes

**OTHERS
PRESENT:**

Gregory Mount, Ph.D., RPA, Assistant Chief Res. Officer
Karen Pannell, Real Time Reporter
Dr. Carolina Maran, Division Director and Chief of District Resiliency,
Flood Control and Water Supply Planning, South Florida Water
Management District
Wesley Oehmig, PE, PhD
Joshua Benjamin, PhD, PE
Suzanne Mechler, PE, CDM Smith

A joint meeting of the Water Advisory Board and Technical Advisory Committee was held on Friday, January 16, 2026, at 10:05 a.m., in Room 430 of the Broward County Governmental Center, Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

I. Call to Order

Senator Geller called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

II. Introduction of New Member

a. Commissioner Hazelle P. Rogers

Chair Geller announced and introduced Commissioner Hazelle P. Rogers as the newest member appointed to the Water Advisory Board. He provided a brief background on her time and experience as an elected official. Commissioner Rogers thanked Chair Geller and spoke on her excitement to be working with the board.

III. Roll Call Broward Water Advisory Board (WAB)

A quorum was present following Roll Call by Real Time Reporter, Karen Pannell.

IV. Roll Call Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

A quorum was present following Roll Call by Real Time Reporter, Karen Pannell.

V. Public Comments

(None.)

VI. **WAB Approval of Meeting Minutes from 11/14/2025

Vice Mayor Caggiano made a motion to approve the minutes from November 14, 2025. Commissioner Biederman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Updates and Announcements

Chair Geller stated that there will be upcoming changes to rules that pertain to County Commission boards, one change specifically applies to the Water Advisory Board. He spoke on the authority of this board, noting that once an item is passed

from the Water Advisory Board it moves onto the Broward County Commission agenda for approval. Chair Geller reiterated the importance of member attendance. He explained that under the new rules appointed members who do not attend will be able to be removed from the board and those vacancies will be filled by the board.

Chair Geller explained that the Solid Waste Authority meeting was taking place at the same time as this WAB/TAC meeting, noting that several members of this board are absent for that reason. He requested that Dr. Mount coordinate the two meetings to avoid overlap due to the important environmental issues that each meeting addresses.

Dr. Mount stated that the 10th running of the Broward Leaders Water Academy recently concluded. He explained that the program has been active for 20 years and showed a photograph of the 2025-2026 participants. Dr. Mount mentioned that several participants are Broward Advisory Board members and returning alumni. He celebrated the participation of over 200 elected officials over the 20-year period. Dr. Mount named several presenters including Chair Geller. He stated that attendees took trips to the Everglades, the Independent Water Control District, and other tours. Dr. Mount thanked the attendees and presenters of the Legislative and Innovation Session and the Reclaimed Water Session of the Academy.

VIII. Presentations:

a. PFAS Regulatory and Destruction Technology and Green Cay Phase 2 Update

Dr. Wesley Oehmig provided an overview of PFAS, explaining that the harmful molecules are in many different products and end up in our domestic water sources. He showed the cycle of PFAS into the air, soil, and water noting the need to treat or destroy the molecules.

Dr. Oehmig spoke on several health effects of PFOS and PFOA which can cause increased cholesterol levels, changes in liver enzymes, decreased infant birth weight, decreased vaccine response in children, risk of high blood pressure, and increased risk of kidney or testicular cancer.

Dr. Oehmig spoke on the regulations of PFAS, which mostly focus on Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administered programs. He discussed the Safe Drinking Water Act, Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation Liability Act (CERCLA), the Clean Water Act, Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).

Dr. Oehmig detailed the difference between a hazardous constituent, hazardous substance, and hazardous waste. He spoke on the EPA administration's proposed changes to define the criteria that will define

whether PFAS would become a hazardous waste in the future.

Dr. Oehmig discussed the Safe Drinking Water Act and its regulations for the maximum contaminant level (MCL) which is the amount of a pollutant or contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. He spoke on several changes to the Drinking Water Regulations between 2023-2025 to put limitations on PFOA and PFOS. Dr. Oehmig explained CERCLA, which does not regulate drinking water but does give the EPA authority to regulate a cleanup response if a site is deemed to have been contaminated by the release of PFOA or PFOS. Chair Geller spoke on the importance of this issue to Broward County due to the lawsuits against water plants alleging responsibility for passing on PFAS/PFOA in the water. Dr. Oehmig discussed legislation as it relates to this issue, noting bills that may grant exemptions for certain industries and utilities and the lack of support for these exemptions.

Dr. Oehmig spoke on the global trends for drinking water regulations. He stated that Europe has lower limits (2 to 4 ng/L) for the sum of several PFAS while the US has 4 ng/L for each PFOS and PFOA. The European Chemical Agency (ECHA) has drafted a proposal, as of August 20, 2025, to ban PFAS use and manufacturing, hoping to have the final restrictions published in 2027/2028.

Dr. Joshua Benjamin spoke on current treatment options and the possible destruction of PFAS. He discussed the filtering of PFAS through membrane to produce purified drinking water which leaves a brine concentrate that can be deep well injected as a form of disposal in Florida. Dr. Benjamin explained the process of High-Recovery Reverse Osmosis (HRRO) noting the advantages, concentration factors, and disadvantages. He spoke on foam fractionation, which is a way to separate the brine concentration from water for destruction and is commercially available.

Dr. Benjamin listed and described four PFAS destruction technologies that are available: Incineration, Electrochemical Oxidation, Plasma Discharge, and Supercritical Water Oxidation. He explained that each option and their level of robustness, scale, and energy costs. Dr. Benjamin discussed potential future changes to regulations, exemptions, and treatment and disposal/destruction technology technologies.

Suzanne Mechler of CDM Smith, spoke on the treatment of wastewater and reclaimed water for use as irrigation water and other uses. She stated that canal and surface waters have similar PFAS components. Ms. Mechler explained the Green Cay project to increase ways of utilizing indirect potable reuse of water by treating it to drinking water standards. She discussed projects in Jacksonville and Palm Beach County permitted under the new reuse regulations, noting that more projects will be coming.

Ms. Mechler provided the Green Cay project overview stating that it is a \$100 million project with CDM Smith as the designer/builder of the indirect potable reuse plant which will use ultrafiltration, reverse osmosis, and UV/advanced oxidation. She stated that the Green Cay project will consist of a treatment area and an education center noting that the million gallons of reusable water per day will be put into the surrounding lake systems which will go into the groundwater. Ms. Mechler showed images of the sites while discussing the progress and future benefits.

Dr. Oehmig and Dr. Benjamin answered several questions from the WAB/TAC members on PFAS exposure, removal, and regulations.

b. C&SF Flood Resiliency (Section 203) Study – Broward Basins – Latest Progress Update and Next Steps

Chair Geller thanked the South Florida Water Management District for their work. (Commissioner Beasley-Pittman arrived)

Referencing a presentation, Dr. Carolina Maran spoke on the work being done to achieve the Water Resources Development Act of 2026 deadline. (Chair Geller noted that Isabel Cosio Carballo was present.) Dr. Maran presented the BB-203 project schedule that began in October 2024 and goes to May/June of 2026. She showed the project study area detailing the nine Watershed Basins, seven Primary Canals, and nine Water Control Structures.

Dr. Maran discussed the Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) which is part of the Army Corps process. She noted the recommendation of project components and highlighted the project locations that will be requesting federal appropriation for design and construction. Dr. Maran detailed the timeline stating that public comments were received, adjustments were made and engineering studies and conceptual designs were produced. She explained that the 30% design mark would be met this week.

Dr. Maran explained the Draft Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Evaluation, which is required as part of the federal project process. She thanked Broward County for the letter of support, cities of Fort Lauderdale, Dania Beach, and Oakland Park for follow-up discussions, and the Seminole Tribe of Florida for comments.

Dr. Maran stated that a separate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis will be released by the US Army Corps of Engineers evaluating the environmental effects of the SFWMD Section 203 Study and that another 30-day public comment period will be opened once the cost certification is obtained. She spoke on the Agency Technical Review (ATR) and the

Independent External Peer review (IEPR) for the final review by the Army Corps for the cost certification.

Dr. Maran summarized the TSP noting that the recommended features meet the project objectives, is cost-effective, and will ensure flood resiliency by addressing concerns and major issues. She stated that the plan addresses changing conditions such as urban growth and extreme rainfall and will support long-term infrastructure performance. She listed several benefits of the plan and spoke about historical flooding that has taken place in Broward County before the implementation of drainage and protection were addressed. Dr. Maran discussed the future projects and components of the Countywide Resiliency Plan that will continue to improve flood resiliency in Broward County.

Chair Geller discussed necessary changes to South Florida drainage due to excessive rainwater and sea level rise which affects the storage capacity of the canals. He affirmed that the Army Corps of Engineers agreed to accept the partnership between Broward County, who paid \$5 million for the Resiliency Study, and the South Florida Water Management District, who matched the funding. Chair Geller acknowledged that though Palm Beach and Dade counties are affected by the changes, Broward County is the only county to help pay for the study in order to accelerate it. He stated that the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) is only awarded every two years and hopes to make the 2026 bill or 2028 would be the earliest. Chair Geller spoke on challenges of funding and the issue of sea level rise.

Dr. Maran answered several questions from the WAB/TAC members regarding the phases of engineering and design, costs, funding, and scheduling.

Chair Geller requested members to contact Congress members and US Senators for assistance with these issues.

c. Broward Rainy Season 2025 Year in Review

No presentation was given due to timing.

IX. New Business

- a. Topics for Discussion at Future WAB Meetings

X. Discussion

(None.)

XI. Lake Okeechobee Water Levels: (ft-NGVD 1929) This month: 13.30; Last month: 13.53; One year ago: 16.18

Next scheduled Joint WAB/TAC - March 13, 2026.Vimeo. G.C. East, Room 430.

Next scheduled TAC Meeting – February 20, 2026. Hybrid. G.C. East, Room 430.

XII. ADJOURN

Chair Geller adjourned the meeting at 12:02 p.m.