

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING SUMMARY NOTES

What: Environmental Health (EH) Committee

When: September 11, 2025

Attending: Board of Health (Board) Members: Paj Nandi and Steve Kutz; Board staff: Michelle Davis, Ash Noble, Molly Dinardo, Michelle Larson, Anna Burns, Crystal Ogle, Ashley Bell, and Hannah Haag; Department of Health (Department) staff: Mike Means, Lauren Jenks, Dani Toepelt, Ashlie Laydon, Brian Sayrs, Joe Laxon, Emily Sanford, Katitza Holthaus, Scott Berberills, Todd Phillips, and Nina Helpling. Approximately 12 members of the public also attended the meeting.

Summary Notes:

Preview October and November Board Meetings

- **Fluoride Science Review Panel**

- Lauren Jenks, Department staff, provided an update on the Department's ethics review process to evaluate their recent Fluoride Science Review Panel. This fall, Lauren plans to present draft methods for the ethics review, including a definition of public health ethics, examples from other health departments, and evaluation methods. This discussion will continue as the process progresses.
- Steve Kutz, Board Member, expressed interest in exploring the scientific principles behind ethical decisions and emphasized the importance of aligning ethical principles with scientific evidence.
- Paj Nandi, Board Member, raised concerns about potential questions from those unfamiliar with bioethics and ethics. There would likely be many questions once more details are available in October. Member Nandi asked if discussions with Local Health Organizations (LHOs) and Local Health Jurisdictions (LHJs) would run parallel to this ethics conversation.
- Lauren responded that the Board could discuss the ethical principles and proposed methods at the upcoming meeting and provide feedback. Lauren mentioned that Dr. Tao Sheng Kwan-Gett met with local health officers, and they agreed to compile a list of FAQs to ensure consistent responses to community inquiries about community water fluoridation.

- **Drinking Water Additives Petition**

- Molly Dinardo, Board staff, shared that the Board received a petition for drinking water additives and plans to discuss it in October.

- **School Environmental Health and Safety Rule Project (SRP)**

- Ash Noble, Board staff, provided an update on upcoming outreach efforts for the SRP. Staff will present at the Washington Association of Maintenance and

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Operation Administrators (WAMOA) and the Washington State Public Health Association (WSPHA).

- Michelle Davis, Board Executive Director, shared that the team received a media inquiry from the Seattle Times about the project and is preparing an update for Public Health Seattle King County. Executive Director Davis said the Board will participate in a panel discussion at WSPHA with the Department, a local health representative, a WAMOA member, and potentially Senator Robinson.

- **Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)**

- Mike Means, Department staff, shared an update on the PFAS emergency rule and ongoing permanent rulemaking. Mike explained that both are crucial for maintaining stricter protections for PFAS. Once the emergency rules are superseded, the permanent rules will solidify these protections. The Department is collaborating with the Board on CR-102 materials and aiming to file in late September 2025. Written comments are due before the November 19 Board public hearing. Pending approval, the CR-103 filing is expected in December or January.
- Steve Kutz, Board Member, shared thoughts on potential PFAS contamination in household items like cookware. Member Kutz suggested that it's safe to assume that items with non-stick coatings may contain PFAS unless cookware documentation is available.
- Mike responded that this issue is outside the scope of the PFAS drinking water regulation. But it may fall under the jurisdiction of the Department of Ecology (Ecology).
- Member Kutz suggested issuing warnings about possible PFAS in cookware and plastic containers.
- Executive Director Davis acknowledged the concern and mentioned that Ecology may already be addressing the issue, referring to a panel discussion from the previous year on PFAS.
- Paj Nandi, Board Member, inquired about what action items will be required of the Board in October and November.
- Mike noted that the process includes the emergency rule renewal scheduled for October, followed by the permanent rules hearing in November. Mike also mentioned that the Environmental Protection Agency is expected to eliminate some regulations and timelines. The Department is working to ensure these changes are incorporated into the rules, amid ongoing legal challenges.
- Member Nandi remarked that this situation is like other decisions the Board has faced.

- **Sanitary Control of Shellfish**

- Dani Toepelt, Department staff, provided updates on the sanitary control of shellfish rulemaking project. The CR-102 has been filed, and the public comment period for the proposed rule is open. A rules briefing is scheduled for October, and a hearing is set for November.
- Paj Nandi, Board Member, asked whether the shellfish industry is expected to raise substantial questions or comments during the formal comment period.

- Dani responded that while there will be questions, many comments can be addressed through further education from the Department.
 - Steve Kutz, Board Member, raised a broader concern about the shellfish industry, particularly regarding the tracking of shellfish safety. Member Kutz shared an experience at a restaurant in Baltimore where the shellfish tag number could not be provided and highlighted potential gaps in the system for tracking public health risks.
 - Dani agreed and emphasized the importance of connecting the commercial shellfish industry with the retail side to improve accountability. Dani mentioned previous work inspecting retail establishments and the need for better tag collection and education for local health jurisdictions and inspectors. This is not currently addressed in the existing rules, but efforts are underway to close these gaps.
 - Member Kutz noted that although food inspection rules exist, ensuring compliance remains a challenge and needs improvement.
- **Rule Reviews**
 - Ash Noble, Board staff, provided updates on two rule reviews for outdoor music festivals and camps. Both rules were last updated in the early 1990s. Policy and engagement staff are collaborating on the reviews. Staff may present updates at the Board's November meeting.

Committee Member Comments, Questions, and Next Steps

- Molly Dinardo, Board staff, reminded members that the EH Committee still needs a Chair. Chair Hayes is currently serving as the temporary Chair for the Health Promotion (HP) Committee. Molly encouraged members to reach out to staff if they are interested in chairing either committee.
- Paj Nandi, Board Member, asked to discuss the chair position at an upcoming Board meeting and suggested Member Peter Browning as a strong candidate for HP Chair given their background.
- Michelle Davis, Executive Director, thanked Member Nandi for the suggestion. The Board has several vacancies, and current members are awaiting reappointment by the Governor's Office. Executive Director Davis shared details about the new appointment process and that they will try to fit the discussion into the October or November meetings.
- Steve Kutz, Board Member, thanked staff for their thorough preparation for the meeting.
- Ash Noble, Board staff, shared that the next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 8, in Tumwater, Washington.