



## 2024 Utility Leadership Conference and 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting **Dealing with Disruption: A New Approach for the Water Sector**

July 23 - 26 | Hyatt Regency Buffalo | Buffalo, NY

*All meetings are on the Mezzanine level unless otherwise noted.*

Δ Board of Directors Committee

*As of August 1, 2024*

### **Tuesday, July 23**

*Morning*

**9:00 – 1:00**

*Grand Ballroom EFG*

**Women's Water Network Program** *(Optional - Separate Registration Required)*

*Afternoon*

**12:00 – 1:45**

*Ellicott Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor*

**Executive Committee Meeting and Lunch Δ**

**2:00 – 4:30**

*Grand Ballroom Foyer*

**Registration**

**2:30 – 5:00**

*Grand Ballroom ABC*

**Committee Discussion Sessions**

*All Conference attendees are welcome to attend.*

**2:30 – 3:30**

*Grand Ballroom ABC*

**Environmental Justice Committee Discussion**

For the first time, the federal government set a goal through its Justice40 Initiative to invest in disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underinvested, and/or overburdened by pollution. But even before these federal goals were set, many clean water utility leaders were already working to implement Environmental Justice (EJ) initiatives that have resulted in clear community benefits – often while facing internal and external pushback. With a federal election ahead, the Committee will showcase how utilities can successfully “root” their EJ programs to insulate them from potential disruptive forces that may chip away at the progress made to date. All Conference attendees are welcome to attend.

**Dr. Kenyani Davis**, Chief Medical Officer  
Community Health Center of Buffalo, Inc. | Buffalo, NY

**Kerrie Gallo**, Deputy Executive Director  
Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper | Buffalo, NY

**Andrew Sawyers**, Director, Office of Wastewater Management  
US Environmental Protection Agency | Washington, DC

**3:30 – 4:00**

**Networking Break**

**4:00 – 5:00**

*Grand Ballroom ABC*

**Legal Affairs Committee Discussion**

From issues the Supreme Court is tackling to major EPA initiatives, a lot is up for grabs in environmental law. The Committee will feature discussions about what is at stake for clean water utilities and how utilities can rise to meet the legal challenges the sector is facing. All Conference attendees are welcome to attend the committee discussion.

**Beth Card**, Senior Policy Advisor  
Smith, Costello & Crawford | Boston, MA

**James Slaughter**, Principal  
Beveridge & Diamond, PC | Washington, DC

*Evening*

**5:00 – 6:00**

*Regency Ballroom Foyer*

**Registration**

**5:30 – 6:30**

*Regency Ballroom*

**Welcoming Happy Hour**

Kick off the *Conference* by joining us at the Welcoming Happy Hour. Connect with fellow attendees, rekindle old connections, and network in a relaxed atmosphere. Happy Hour is open to all so enjoy a quick bite and meet us there!

**Wednesday, July 24**

*Morning*

**8:00 – 9:15**

*Niagara Room*

**Financial Plan Task Force Breakfast Δ**

**9:00 – 11:30**

*Grand Ballroom Foyer*

**Registration**

**9:00 – 10:00**

*Ellicott Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor*

**Spouse & Guest Lounge**

**9:00 – 5:00**

*Sun Garden Lounge*

**NACWA Networking Lounge**

The lounge provides an opportunity to connect with your peers during the conference.

**9:30 – 12:00**

*Grand Ballroom ABC*

**Committee Discussion Sessions**

*All Conference attendees are welcome to attend.*

**9:30 – 10:30**

*Grand Ballroom ABC*

**Utility & Resource Management Committee Discussion**

The Committee will feature a presentation and discussion exploring the balance between the benefits of digitalization and growing cybersecurity risks. Through the lens of recent cyber-attacks, the presentation will also look ahead to the impact of emerging technologies

including artificial intelligence. Using a utility case study, the Committee will also discuss long range capital planning and the challenge of predicting future regulatory needs and drivers. All Conference attendees are welcome to attend.

**Ian Bramson**, Vice President – Global Industrial Cybersecurity  
Black and Veatch Corporation | Denver, CO

**Kamuron Gurol**, Division Director  
King County Wastewater Treatment Division | Seattle, WA

**10:30 – 11:00**

### **Networking Break**

**11:00 – 12:00**

*Grand Ballroom ABC*

### **Biosolids Management Committee Discussion**

Given the realization that PFAS – at least for the time being – is a concern that is here to stay, the Committee will discuss recent state and federal biosolids happenings and their impacts on biosolids management. We will hear from the Director of EPA's Office of Science and Technology, Deborah Nagle, on the Agency's final Biosolids Working Group discussions and what is coming later this fall on risk assessment. The Committee will also discuss concerns over how to effectively communicate relative risk of PFAS in biosolids absent any Clean Water Act Part 503 standards. All Conference attendees are welcome to attend.

**Deborah Nagle**, Director, Office of Science and Technology  
US Environmental Protection Agency | Washington, DC

**Lloyd Winchell**, Associate Engineer  
Brown and Caldwell | St. Paul, MN

*Afternoon*

**12:00 – 2:30**

### **Lunch on Your Own**

**12:00 – 2:00**

*Regency Ballroom*

### **Optional Lunch – Collaborative Delivery Fundamentals and Equitable Risk Allocation (Free; Separate RSVP Required)**

Join the Water Collaborative Delivery Association (WCDA) for a lunchtime session on the fundamentals of collaborative delivery methods for water and wastewater, with a focus on equitable risk allocation for all parties. This event is open to all, and will be of particular benefit to senior leadership, legal counsel, and procurement professionals responsible for making risk-related business decisions and implementing them in design and construction contracts.

Please complete [this form](#) by **July 3** to RSVP for this event.

**12:15 – 2:00**

*Boardroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor*

### **Awards Committee Meeting and Lunch Δ**

**2:00 – 4:30**

*Grand Ballroom Foyer*

### **Registration**

**2:30 – 5:00**

*Grand Ballroom ABC*

### **Committee Discussion Sessions**

*All Conference attendees are welcome to attend.*

**2:30 – 3:30**

*Grand Ballroom ABC*

### **Operations Committee Discussion**

The Committee will feature a presentation on smart sewer programs, including a utility case study. Discussion topics will include the successes of these programs over time, the improvements made along the way, and next steps as the programs reach maturity. The Committee will also feature a presentation on energy management and how utilities can establish energy goals and accelerate the growth of their energy programs. Opportunities for Department of Energy funding for energy conservation and production at clean water utilities will also be highlighted. All Conference attendees are welcome to attend.

**Katie Richardson**, Director, Principal Associate and Office Director  
TYLin Greeley and Hansen Water Solutions | Chicago, IL

**Kevin Shafer**, Executive Director  
Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District | Milwaukee, WI

**Rosaleen Nogle**, Principal Sanitary Engineer  
Buffalo Sewer Authority | Buffalo, NY

**3:30 – 4:00**

### **Networking Break**

**4:00 – 5:00**

*Grand Ballroom ABC*

### **Water Quality Committee Discussion**

The Committee will discuss a variety of water quality-related “disruptions” that are poised to make regulatory compliance more challenging and expensive for clean water agencies. These upcoming federal water quality criteria updates – especially EPA’s forthcoming recommended human health criteria for PFOA and PFOS – will have serious impacts on utilities. The Committee will discuss what is likely coming on the PFAS front along with other updates, like emerging nutrient issues from EPA Regions 5 and 10 dealing with hypoxia and dead zones that may set the tone for the rest of the country. All Conference attendees are welcome to join us to learn how to best prepare your agency for the water quality race to zero ahead.

**Deborah Nagle**, Director, Office of Science and Technology  
US Environmental Protection Agency | Washington, DC

*Evening*

**6:00 – 7:30**

*Grand Ballroom EFG*

### **Awards Ceremony & Reception**

Join us for a celebratory evening honoring exceptional NACWA utility facilities for their outstanding achievements in compliance, and individuals for their unmeasured service to NACWA. Following the Ceremony, we invite you to join your colleagues in celebrating the evening’s honorees at the Awards Reception.

## **Thursday, July 25**

*Morning*

**8:30 – 11:30**

**Registration**

*Grand Ballroom Foyer*

**9:00 – 10:00**

**Spouse & Guest Lounge**

*Ellicott Room,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor*

**9:00 – 5:00**

**NACWA Networking Lounge**

*Sun Garden Lounge*

The lounge provides an opportunity to connect with your peers during the conference.

**9:00 – 12:00**

**Plenary Session I**

*Grand Ballroom ABC*

**9:00 – 9:05**

**Opening Remarks**

**Oluwole “OJ” McFoy**, NACWA President 2023-2024

**9:05 – 9:20**

**Welcoming Remarks**

**The Honorable Byron Brown**, Mayor  
The City of Buffalo | Buffalo, NY

**9:20 – 9:50**

**Keynote Address**

**Perspectives from US EPA’s Office of Water**

Bruno Pigott, Acting Assistant Administrator for US EPA’s Office of Water, will discuss the Administration’s top priorities and reflect on the partnership between clean water utilities and the Agency.

**Bruno Pigott**, Acting Assistant Administrator, Office of Water  
US Environmental Protections Agency | Washington, DC

**9:50 – 10:40**

**Panel Discussion**

**AI... The Big Picture and What May Be Coming Water’s Way**

As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to evolve and new uses for it emerge, our current ways of doing business may rapidly change. Although the impacts of AI in the water sector are just beginning, utilities can learn from how disruptions from AI are taking shape within the sector and how these compare to experiences outside the sector. Building on the keynote address, panelists will discuss the benefits, as well as the potential pitfalls, of using AI in operations, from how they analyze data and make decisions, to how workforce needs may evolve.

*Keynote*

**Rob Henderson**, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer  
YOURIKA Labs | Toronto, Ontario

*Moderator*

**Cristina Ahmadpour**, President  
Isle Utilities | Palo Alto, CA

*Panelists*

**Jim Cooper**, Global Director, Water Optimization  
Arcadis | Akron, OH

**Ori Reshef**, Chief Solutions Officer  
Kando | Tel Aviv, Israel

**10:40 – 10:55**

**Networking Break**

**10:55 – 11:40**

**Panel Discussion**

**How Community Engagement Drives Better Outcomes. . . The Buffalo Case Study**

With utilities under pressure to address complicated issues such as PFAS, affordability, and environmental justice, community engagement has never been more important. Developing partnerships and listening to the perspectives of community members can help utilities understand the impacts of their investment priorities, as well as raise support in the community for the actions required to meet increasing regulatory demands – including raising rates. In this case study of the City of Buffalo, panelists will discuss the successes and ongoing challenges of community engagement.

*Moderator*

**Porsha Ari Parson**, Chief Marketing and PR Strategist  
Ari Parson, LLC | Buffalo, NY

*Panelists*

**Franchelle Parker**, Executive Director  
Open Buffalo | Buffalo, NY

**Perry Pope**, Preventative Maintenance Coordinator  
Buffalo Sewer Authority | Buffalo, NY

**11:40 – 11:55**

*Grand Ballroom ABC*

**Annual Association Business Meeting**

- Report of the President
- Report of the Treasurer
- Election of Directors
- Report of the Chief Executive Officer

**11:55 – 12:00**

**Closing Remarks**

**Oluwole “OJ” McFoy**, NACWA President 2023-2024

*Afternoon*

**12:15 – 2:15**

*Grand Ballroom EFG*

**Board of Directors Meeting **

**2:00 – 4:00**

*Grand Ballroom Foyer*

**Registration**

**2:30 – 5:00**

*Grand Ballroom ABC*

**Plenary Session II**

**2:30 – 2:35**

### **Opening Remarks**

**Diane Taniguchi-Dennis**, *NACWA President 2024-2025*  
Chief Executive Officer  
Clean Water Services | Hillsboro, OR

**2:35 – 3:40**

### **Rethinking Relationships . . . Getting Out of Our Comfort Zone**

With the challenges of meeting complex and costly regulatory requirements, growing affordability pressures, and rapidly evolving technology, utilities are being asked to rethink existing and consider forming new partnerships. Whether it is a new way of interfacing with public officials and politicians, close partners in the private sector including engineering and consulting firms, or investor-owned utilities, efforts by NACWA and its utility members to collaborate may need to take more nontraditional paths. Panelists will focus on the trends demanding new partnerships and how utilities and the organizations that represent them must adapt.

#### *Keynote*

**Matthew Pine**, President and Chief Executive Officer  
Xylem, Inc. | South Bend, IN

#### *Moderator*

**Mickey Conway**, *NACWA Vice President 2024-2025*  
Chief Executive Officer  
Metro Water Recovery | Denver, CO

#### *Panelists*

**David Goldwater**, Vice President, Public Policy  
Stantec | Fairfax, VA

**Jennifer Prescott**, Senior Vice President and  
Chief Digital Information Officer  
CDM Smith | Denver, CO

**Reese Tisdale**, President & Chief Executive Officer  
Bluefield Research | Boston, MA

**3:40 – 3:55**

### **Networking Break**

**3:55 – 4:55**

### **What Can the Clean Water Sector Learn from Alternative Perceptions?**

Regulatory developments related to PFAS have captured the attention of the media and the public, but long-time concerns related to aging infrastructure, wet weather and affordability remain. Utility leaders' preferred approaches to these issues often differ from environmental groups and other organizations. While it is easy to keep our heads down and focused on the issues at hand, it is important to listen to the perceptions of these organizations and alternative opinions from within the sector. Although these conversations may at times be

uncomfortable, they can help utilities to learn new approaches to dealing with their challenges and potentially find a middle-ground where collaboration based on mutual understanding can be reached.

*Moderator*

**Diane Taniguchi-Dennis**, NACWA President 2024-2025

*Panelists*

**Jessica Dandridge-Smith**, Executive Director  
The Water Collaborative of Greater New Orleans | New Orleans, LA

**Katy Lackey**, Senior Associate, Water Equity & Climate Resilience  
PolicyLink | Washington, DC

**Kelly Moser**, Senior Attorney and Leader of the Water Program  
Southern Environmental Law Center | Chapel Hill, NC

**4:55 – 5:00**

**Closing Remarks**

**Diane Taniguchi-Dennis**, NACWA President 2024-2025

*Evening*

**5:30**

*Hotel Lobby*

**Bus Transportation – President's Reception**

Please meet in the Hotel Lobby to board the bus to our President's Reception. Please note that the bus will take approximately 45 minutes to reach the venue.

**6:30 – 8:30**

*Top of The Falls  
Goat Island Rd.  
Niagara Falls, NY*

**President's Reception**

Please join us at Top of the Falls to celebrate outgoing President OJ McFoy and welcome incoming President Diane Taniguchi-Dennis! Enjoy breathtaking views from the beautiful grounds of the only restaurant overlooking Niagara Falls. Transportation to and from the event will be provided and a dinner buffet is included. The reception and dinner will be outside in a tented space just steps away from the top of Niagara Falls, so please dress casually. The bus

**Friday, July 26**

*Morning*

**9:00 – 10:30**

*Grand Ballroom Foyer*

**Registration**

**9:30 – 11:30**

*Grand Ballroom ABC*

**Plenary Session III**

**9:30 – 9:35**

**Opening Remarks**

**Mickey Conway**, NACWA Vice President 2024-2025

**9:35 – 10:05**

**Improving the Messenger: Words that Work for Water**

Utilities know they do vital work to protect health and the environment under increasingly complex and difficult regulatory challenges and that their communities could not function without them. But does the public

understand this? How can utility leaders sharpen their messaging around their mission – locally and nationally? How can we more compellingly describe our work in ways that break through to the media, to our ratepayers and our local stakeholders? Karyn LeBlanc and Vincent Morris will provide a synopsis of their findings based on survey and focus groups conversations and provide suggestions on how we can refine our “Elevator Pitch” – and begin building a renewed interest and appreciation for our work.

**Karyn Le Blanc**, Chief Executive Officer  
KGL Communications | Washington, DC

**Vincent Morris**, Senior Vice President  
KGL Communications | Washington, DC

**10:05 – 10:15**

### **Networking Break**

**10:15 – 11:20**

### **Navigating Turbulent Leadership Waters**

Utility leaders are finding that their roles are expanding from simply running a treatment facility that meets its regulatory requirements, to guiding their agency through complex financial situations, HR/workforce issues, and an increasingly political environment. This panel will dive into the top challenges of today’s utility leaders, how some leaders are dealing with these challenges more effectively, and how these skills and strategies can be developed and passed along to their peers and staff, as well as the next generation of water sector leaders.

#### *Moderator*

**Adam Krantz**, Chief Executive Officer  
National Association of Clean Water Agencies | Washington, DC

#### *Panelists*

**Beate Wright**, Founder and Chief Executive Officer  
Wright for You, LLC | Clifton, VA

**Alan Heymann**, Founder and Coach  
Peaceful Direction | Silver Spring, MD

**Michael Mucha**, Past Chair  
Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure | Madison, WI

**11:20 – 11:30**

### **Closing Remarks**

**Diane Taniguchi-Dennis**, NACWA President 2024-2025