

**SEFLUC
Regulatory Update
May 13, 2019**

Updates

• **Development of new Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule**

- In January 2019, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced that a series of National Environmental Policy Act public scoping meetings would be held throughout February regarding the development of the new Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS), see <https://www.saj.usace.army.mil/Media/News-Releases/Article/1742909/corps-invites-public-to-provide-input-on-new-lake-okeechobee-system-operating-m/>. *Meeting dates are on SEFLUC calendar*
- In January 4, 2019 letter, Gov.-Elect DeSantis requested Pres. Trump to direct the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers commence public review of LORS to protect human health and safety, including “mitigating toxic water flows into the population of the Florida public, ensuring the necessary water quantity and quality for the greater Everglades region, and protecting the stability of the Herbert Hoover Dike.”
- On January 29, 2019 Gov. DeSantis announced that he supported reducing the lake level to about 10.5 feet, about 2 feet lower than the current 12.6 feet pre-wet season level currently implemented by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the existing 2008 LORS **Project purposes** - flood control, water supply, recreation, navigation and environmental effects to fish and wildlife, cultural and recreational resources.
- Updated Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM) and accompanying Environmental Impact Statement
- **Announced USACE Schedule:**

Public Scoping/Plan Formulation	Feb. – Sept. 2019
Public Workshops/Alternative Evaluation	Oct. 2019 – Sept. 2021
Prepare Draft LOSOM/EIS	Oct. 2021 – Jan. 2022
Public Comment on LOSOM/EIS	Feb – Mar. 2022
Prepare Final LOSOM/EIS	Apr. – May 2022
Final LOSOM/EIS	June 2022
Signed Record of Decision	September 2022

- **Held Public Scoping Meetings**

Lehigh Acres	February 5
Okeechobee	February 6
Clewiston	February 11
Stuart	February 19
Ft. Lauderdale	February 26
West Palm Beach	February 27
Miami Gardens	February 28
Marathon	March 20

- Member utilities comments at public scoping meeting raise concerns about change in regulation schedule:
 - Need to provide safe, reliable water services to 6.5 million customers
 - CERP and WSE are foundation for current water use permits and SFMWD regulations
 - LORS08 was intended as interim measure and WSE regulation schedule was to be restored after dike repairs
 - Even more onerous regulatory schedule may jeopardize meeting permit and rule requirements, dependable water supply
 - Base condition for reevaluation should recognize reliance of existing programs on WSE, 1 in 10 level of protection for public supply
 - Any proposed changes should maintain current levels of public supply availability and reduce water shortage frequency, take into account cutbacks caused by LORS08
 - Lower lake levels could exacerbate salt water intrusion, change in scheduled should maintain necessary hydraulic head
 - Evaluation should incorporate climactic impact variability on regional system
- March 15, 2019 joint letter of concern submitted to USACE and SFWMD regarding current Lake operations
- Update on SEFLUC meeting with USACE on April 4, 2019
- April 22, 2019 SEFLUC submits comment letter regarding LOSOM scope.
- **EPA Requests Comments on Conduit Theory**
 - **February 19, 2019** – US Supreme Court agreed to review Maui’s Petition for Review as to whether CWA’s prohibition as to unpermitted discharges covers activities that cause pollutants to be conveyed through groundwater to waters of the United States. Decision will probably be issued by October. However, there is some talk that Maui may withdraw its petition.

- **WOTUS**
 - January 10 – Public Webcast (may be rescheduled due to shutdown)
 - Proposed rule published 2/14/19, accepting comments through 4/15/19.
 - Proposed rule is significantly narrower than 2015 WOTUS Rule, more closely replicates case law with some exceptions
 - Abandons idea of significant nexus test
 - 1st category things that are WOTUS
 - 2nd category things that are not WOTUS
 - 3rd section definitions
 - Includes definition of what constitutes a cooling pond
 - Clarified what is considered prior converted crop land and abandonment.
- **Biosolids TAC**
 - **January 23, 2019** – Final TAC meeting held
 - **TAC Recommendations:**
 - Modify current permitting rules to establish site specific rates of application, evaluate water extraction rate to inform appropriate application rate, establish low, medium, and high-risk site criteria to guide application practices and monitoring
 - Increase inspection rates for land application
 - Biosolid and nutrient management research on run-off
 - Promote pilot projects
 - Legislation regarding TAC recommendations did not pass during 2019 Session.
- **Potable Reuse Commission Meeting**
 - **NEXT MEETING – Friday May 17, 2019** – Osceola County UF/IFAS Extension, 1921 Kissimmee Valley Lane, Kissimmee
 - <http://prc.watereuseflorida.com/>

Continuing to Monitor/No Update

- **SFWMD EAA Storage Reservoir**
 - **November 9** – FWF legal challenge to prevent SFWMD from expediting and completing EAA storage reservoir
 - **November 8** – SFWMD approved land lease terminating agricultural operations on 560 acres in the EAA and gave the District control to begin site work to expedite EAA storage reservoir project
- **FAA Reauthorization & Disaster Program Reforms (HR 302)**
 - Exempts drones from restrictions to help facilitate post-catastrophic response operations, such as utility restoration

- Disaster Recovery Reform Act
 - Within 180 days, guidance document for local governments and utilities on
 - (1) the need to prioritize assistance to hospitals, nursing homes, and other long-term care facilities to ensure that such health care facilities remain functioning or return to functioning as soon as practicable during power outages caused by natural hazards, including severe weather events;
 - (2) how hospitals, nursing homes and other long-term care facilities should adequately prepare for power outages during a major disaster or emergency, as those terms are defined in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122); and
 - (3) how State, local, and Indian tribal governments, first responders, utility companies, hospitals, nursing homes, and other long-term care facilities should develop a strategy to coordinate emergency response plans, including the activation of emergency response plans, in anticipation of a major disaster, including severe weather events
 - Public Assistance Grant Program
 - 60 days after act, must conduct a review of assessment and eligibility process under the public assistance grant program with respect to assistance provided for damaged underground water infrastructure.
- **America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 – Signed into Law October 23, 2018**
 - Title I Water Resources Development
 - Expediting Lake O regulation review
 - Kissimmee River Restoration credit opportunity for work by non-Federal sponsor of project for ecosystem restoration
 - Title II Drinking Water Infrastructure
 - Drinking Water section that includes some new funding opportunities for resiliency/sustainability (several modest appropriation but as an aggregate appear to be good news)
 - **Risk Assessments & Vulnerability Assessment Certifications tiered compliance dates and then every 5 years after.**
 - **Consumer Confidence Reports to biannual starting in 2020**
 - School drinking fountain replacement
 - Improved accuracy and availability of monitoring data
 - Asset Management Plan (encouragement not mandate)
 - Disadvantaged community and appears to be some affordability issues addressed

- SRF, WIFIA funding
 - Source water protections
 - Monitoring for unregulated contaminants (small utilities- 3,300 to 10,000)
- **Amendment 1 Funding**
 - Judge Dodson canceled trial brought by environmental groups challenging the State’s use of Amendment 1 money stating he was finding in favor of the plaintiffs and the use of Amendment 1 money by the Legislature did violate the Florida Constitution. Order is still pending and State will appeal.
- **EPA Toxicological Profile for Perfluoroalkyls**
 - Public Comment Closed August 20
 - The Tox Profile is accompanied by a fact sheet that utilities may find helpful in putting drinking water PFAS exposure in context for customers.
 - EPA is expected to release draft toxicity values for perfluoro-2-propoxypropanoic acid (GenX) - a replacement chemical for PFOA, and perfluorobutane sulfonate (PFBS) in August.
- **PFOA/PFAS Standards**
 - Currently, the EPA has a **non-enforceable** health advisory level of 70 parts per trillion for Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) combined.
 - The two compounds are the focus of several activities at EPA, including a national summit in Washington, D.C., in May. **The agency has committed itself to evaluating PFOA and PFAS for regulation in drinking water.**
- **EPA – Office of Inspector General Report**
 - November 15, 2018 – EPA Unable to Assess the Impact of Hundreds of Unregulated Pollutants in Land-Applied Biosolids on Human Health and Environment (https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-11/documents/_epaig_20181115-19-p-0002.pdf)
 - Land Application of biosolids is not adequately regulated to ensure