

Vermont Clean Water Board Meeting
State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2026 Clean Water Budget Public Hearing Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: Friday, November 8, 2024, 8:00 – 10:30 AM

Virtual Option to Attend: [Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

Physical Location to Attend In-Person: Agency of Natural Resources, One National Life Drive, Montpelier, VT 05620-3510 in the Catamount Room (Davis Building, 2nd Floor, Room D215).

Meeting details, materials, and recordings available at: <https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/cwi/board/meetings>

Clean Water Board Members/Designees:

- Douglas Farnham, Agency of Administration (AoA) Chief Recovery Officer and Designated Clean Water Board Chair (Present)
 - Tayt Brooks, Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) Deputy Secretary (Present)
 - Bob Flint, public member (Present)
 - Joe Flynn, Agency of Transportation (VTrans) Secretary (Present)
 - Jim Giffin, public member (Present)
 - Julie Moore, Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) Secretary (Present)
 - Anson Tebbetts, Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM) Secretary (Absent)
 - Chad Tyler, public member (Present)
 - Jeanne Voorhees, public member (Present)
-

1. Showing of pre-recorded [State Fiscal Year \(SFY\) 2026 Clean Water Budget presentation](#)

Optional for those who viewed the pre-recorded presentation on their own schedule

2. Welcome

Recording Timestamp 00:00 - 4:30¹

Douglas Farnham, Agency of Administration Chief Recovery Officer and Clean Water Board Chair

Chair Farnham began the meeting at 8:45 AM and gave an overview of the meeting agenda.

3. Clarifying questions and answers on draft SFY 2026 Clean Water Budget

Led by Emily Bird,

Recording Timestamp 4:30 – 13:56

¹ Please refer to the available meeting recording to learn more about discussion content under each agenda item. Recording Time Stamps are highlighted to direct focus on the recording. Recording can be directly accessed here: <https://youtu.be/vXY0BrXsJRI>

Department of Environmental Conservation Clean Water Initiative Program Manager

- Chip Sawyer, St. Albans City, asked a clarifying question on the availability of MS4 (municipal separate sewer storm system) funding for State Fiscal Years 2025 and 2026. Emily Bird confirmed no available funding through the Clean Water Budget and listed alternative opportunities for these communities to fund stormwater improvements.
- Maurice Dennis asked about what federal or state rules and regulations drive the TMDLs (total maximum daily loads) and how far along the state is to meeting its TMDL goals. Emily Bird provided additional background on Vermont's TMDLs and additional resources **were** shared in the chat: [Clean Water Storymap](#), [Clean Water Initiative Reports](#), [Clean Water Portal](#)

4. Public comment
Chair Farnham

Recording Timestamp 13:56 – 49:33

Commenters:

1. **Dana** Doran, Professional Logging Contractors of the Northeast, commented on forestry challenges and stressed that the Board should use funds to supply more skidder bridges and provide reduced interest rate financing for low-impact logging equipment.
2. Ernest Englehardt, Lake Carmi Campers Association, thanked the Board for their time and support of the Lake Carmi alum treatment. He shared that the aeration system will hopefully be removed soon, and the alum treatment could begin this coming spring.
3. Chip Sawyer, St. Albans City, commented that he thinks MS4 communities will need additional funding for the MS4 General Permit to be successful and that some MS4 stormwater projects do not rank well through the Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund, given their expense.
4. Peter Benevento, Lake Carmi Campers Association, thanked the Board and reiterated Ernie Englehardt's comment and added that the permitting for the alum treatment has been completed.
5. Pat Suozzi, Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds, shared a concern about rising chloride levels in waterways and recommended more funding for projects that reduce the use of road salt. She also commented on the importance of protecting non- impaired waterways and on the negative impact of the spread of introduced **aquatic** species.
6. Zack Porter, Standing Trees, commented that forest management should benefit clean water as much as possible, especially on public lands. He urged the Board to consider how logging operations impact water quality on public lands when considering what guardrails to set around financial assistance provided to the logging industry.
7. Clare Ireland, Vermont Association of Conservation Districts, requested an increase in the funding amount for the Tactical Basin Planning grants and thanked the Board for continued support of the Enhancement grants.

5. Conclude public hearing, five-minute break

6. Begin extended Clean Water Board meeting

7. Recap October 11, 2024 Clean Water Board meeting discussion and action items **Recording Timestamp 49:33 – 54:33**

Chair Farnham

Chair Farnham began the extended Clean Water Board meeting by sharing that the Board would discuss items that were previously brought up in the meeting on October 11.

8. Overview of financing concept for stormwater and forestry regulatory compliance **Recording Timestamp 54:33 - 1:02:29**


Gianna Petito, Department of Environmental Conservation Clean Water Initiative Program Grants Supervisor

Gianna provided more high-level details on how the proposed financing concept for stormwater and forestry regulatory compliance would operate including goals of the program, impacted audiences, and additional considerations for design. This program is intended to lower the cost of borrowing capital for these entities so they may more easily access the cash needed to implement projects.

9. Report on interest income in Clean Water Fund operating statement **Recording Timestamp 1:02:29 – 1:12:29**

Nick Kramer,

Department of Finance and Management Budget Analyst

Nick shared the results of an exercise that he undertook to explore whether the Board should incorporate projected future interest income into its annual revenue forecast. Options on this item will be presented to the Board  in a future Clean Water Board Meeting for their consideration.

10. Continued discussion from October 11, 2024 Board meeting

Full Board led by Chair Farnham

Recording Timestamp 1:12:29 – 1:48:39

The Board asked questions and discussed the financing concept for stormwater and forestry regulatory compliance. Topics included:

- Consultation with the Office of State Treasurer and lending institutions on reception to the concept.
- Whether one program would be developed to serve both 3-acre and logging, or separate programs.
- The Board asked questions and discussed the logging industry needs related to low-impact logging equipment as well as portable skidder bridges. This includes:
 - Portable skidder bridges are in use by municipalities as temporary emergency bridges due to damage from recent floods. The Board considered purchasing additional portable skidder bridges to be available for forestry and available as needed for future emergency response.

11. Wrap-up, summarize next steps

Recording Timestamp 10:25-10:30

Chair Farnham

- Emily Bird shared that the SFY 2026 Clean Water Budget public comment period runs from October 18-November 17, 2024 and encouraged participants to go to the Clean Water Board website for additional materials on the Board's Budget Process. Following the end of the public comment period, the CWIP team will compile a responsiveness summary based on public feedback for the Board to review in the meeting on December 3rd.
- Chair Farnham addressed the impact that the 2023 and 2024 flooding events have had on the state and commented on how the skidder bridge line item could potentially aid the community in flooding events.

12. Adjourn

Chair Farnham adjourned the meeting at 10:30 am.

Recording Timestamp 1:48:39