MINUTES

North Dakota State Water Commission
Special Meeting via Microsoft Teams
August 26, 2026

The ND State Water Commission (Commission or SWC) held a special meeting via Microsoft Teams on August 26, 2026. Lt. Governor Strinden called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM. A quorum was present. The board opened the meeting by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

State Water Commission Members Present:
Lt. Governor Strinden, Acting Chairman
Doug Goehring, ND Agriculture Commissioner
Michael Anderson, Lower Red River Basin
Jeff Frith, Devils Lake Basin
Steve Hansen, James River Basin
James Odermann, Little Missouri, Upper Heart, and Upper Cannonball River Basins
Gene Veeder, Upper Missouri River Basin
Jay Volk, Lower Missouri River Basin
April Walker, Upper Red River Basin
Jason Zimmerman, Mouse River Basin

Others Present:
Reice Haase, Director, ND Dept. of Water Resources (DWR or Department) and Commission Secretary
Patrick Fridgen, DWR Deputy Director
Jen Verleger, DWR General Counsel
DWR Staff
Approximately 32 people present online.

CONSIDERATION OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Zimmerman moved to approve the August 26, 2026, special meeting agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Anderson and passed by unanimous vote.

DROUGHT DISASTER LIVESTOCK PROGRAM

Reice Haase, DWR Director, stated the Drought Disaster Livestock Water Supply Assistance Program (DDLWSAP) was activated on August 18, 2026. The Commission authorized $2,000,000, consisting of the remaining $1,713,564 in carryover funding from the 2021-23 biennium and $286,436 from the 2025-27 discretionary fund. During the current activation, the program has received applications from 191 producers to develop 221 reliable livestock water supply projects, and the Department of Water Resources has obligated approximately $1,012,027 in cost-share funding for 122 approved projects. Approximately $967,973 remains in currently appropriated funding from the August 18, 2026, activation. There are an additional 97 applications awaiting staff review for an estimated $807,311, leaving approximately $160,662 available for the DDLWSAP.

The following motion was made:

> **Moved by Commissioner Goehring and seconded by Commissioner Veeder the Commission appropriate, in accordance with the drought disaster declaration issued by the Governor of North Dakota, an additional $2,000,000 for the Drought Disaster Livestock Water Supply Assistance Program, for a total of $4,000,000 for the 2026 program activation.**

Commissioners Anderson, Frith, Hansen, Odermann, Veeder, Volk, Walker, Zimmerman, Goehring, and Lt. Governor Strinden voted aye. There were no nay votes. The motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Under Authority of NDCC § 44-04-19.1(9) for Attorney Client Consultation regarding Northwest Area Water Supply Biota Water Treatment Plant

It was the recommendation of Lt. Governor Strinden that further discussion relating to the Northwest Area Water Supply Biota Water Treatment Plant be held in Executive Session, under the provisions of NDCC § 44-04-19.1(9), for the purpose of attorney consultation. The Commission invited the following to participate in the Executive Session:

State Water Commission Members Present:
Lt. Governor Strinden, Acting Chairman
Doug Goehring, Commissioner, ND Agriculture Commissioner
Michael Anderson, Lower Red River Basin
Jeff Frith, Devils Lake Basin
Steve Hansen, James River Basin
James Odermann, Little Missouri, Upper Heart, and Upper Cannonball River Basins
Gene Veeder, Upper Missouri River Basin
Jay Volk, Lower Missouri River Basin
April Walker, Upper Red River Basin
Jason Zimmerman, Mouse River Basin

Others Present:
Reice Haase, DWR Director and Commission Secretary
Patrick Fridgen, DWR Deputy Director
Jen Verleger, DWR General Counsel
Sindhuja S. Pillai Grinolds, DWR Water Development Division Director
Brandon Hicks, NAWS Project Manager
Shana Brost, Administrative Officer
Chris Kadrmas, DWR Administration Division Director
Abby Ebach, DWR Policy Advisor
Aaron Weber, Policy Advisor, Governor's Office
Ben Gehrig, DWR Data & Technology Services
Caryn Boisen, Larson King (DWR Outside Counsel)

Moved by Commissioner Zimmerman and seconded by Commissioner Volk that under the provision of NDCC § 44-04-19.1(9), the Commission proceed into Executive Session on August 26, 2026, at 1:08 PM for the purpose of attorney consultation relating to the Northwest Area Water Supply Biota Water Treatment Plant.

Commissioners Anderson, Frith, Hansen, Odermann, Veeder, Volk, Walker, Zimmerman, Goehring, and Lt. Governor Strinden voted aye. There were no nay votes. The motion carried.

Following attorney consultation regarding the Northwest Area Water Supply Biota Water Treatment Plant, Lt. Governor Strinden reconvened the open session of the Commission meeting at 1:34 PM.

Lt Governor Strinden indicated that the Commission provided guidance to staff and legal counsel during the executive session, and that no motions were made.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Lt. Governor Strinden adjourned the August 26, 2026, special meeting at 1:35 PM. The next State Water Commission meeting will be held on September 16, 2026, at 1:00 PM CT.

Michelle L. Strinden

Michelle Strinden, Lieutenant Governor
Acting Chairman, State Water Commission

Reice Haase, Director, DWR
Secretary to the State Water Commission