SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL & INSTITUTIONAL
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2026 – 10:00 AM
MINUTES

Committee Members

James Morris – CEMEX
Ilia Balcom – Duke Energy Florida
Rachel McGraw – Duke Energy Florida (alternate)
Keith Nadaskay – Mosaic Fertilizer (alternate)
Jackelyn Julien – Port Tampa Bay (alternate)
Justin Gostnell – Seminole Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Terry Eastley – Tampa Electric Company
Nick Fletcher – Tampa Electric Company (alternate)
Suchi Daniels – University of South Florida
Max Levine – Publix
Dave Lazarus – Publix (alternate)
Jennifer Ritter – Coca-Cola Beverages Florida

Interested Parties

Jessica Massanelli, Publix
Sean McGinnis, Lakeland Electric
Samantha Pieske, Pieske Consulting Services

Administrative Support

Virginia Singer
Barbara Matrone

1. **Call to Order and Introductions**
   The Industrial, Commercial & Institutional Advisory Committee (ICIAC) of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) met for its regular meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, August 11, 2026, via Microsoft Teams.

   Chair James Morris called the meeting to order, and attendance was taken.

2. **Additions and Deletions to the Agenda**
   None.

3. **Approval of May 5, 2026 Meeting Minutes**
   A motion was made to approve the draft minutes from the May 5, 2026 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Public Comments**
   None.

The Chair reordered the presentations to accommodate speaker's availability.

6. Hydrologic Conditions Update

Joey Fogel, Senior Data Analyst, provided an update on current hydrologic conditions. He reported that July marked the second month of the four-month wet season, but conditions were drier than normal. Monthly and 12-month rainfall totals were slightly below average, even with heavier rain late in the month. Warmer temperatures increased evaporation and vegetation water use, causing rainfall to be used quickly. The region is currently experiencing an El Niño pattern, which can influence summer rainfall.

In July, the District received 7.1 inches of rainfall, reflecting a deficit of about 1.1 inches compared to the historic average of 8.2 inches. Rainfall varied significantly across the region, with the highest total near Yankeetown in Citrus and Levy counties at approximately 16 inches, and the lowest in Lake County at about 2.2 inches.

The 12-month rainfall distribution from August 2025 to July 2026 averaged 37.4 inches, representing a 15.2-inch deficit compared to the historic average of 52.6 inches. The highest amount of rainfall was near The Villages at 51.5 inches and the lowest was in Hillsborough County near Tampa at 20.7 inches. A graph illustrating the 12-month rainfall departure from average showed multiple periods of surplus or deficit rainfall since 1998. The 12-month period ending in July 2026 reflected a 15.2-inch deficit, compared to 3.1-inch surplus during the same period ending in July 2025.

Mr. Fogel then reviewed recent groundwater levels across the northern, central and southern counties, as well as surface water levels in the Northern Lakes, Tampa Bay Lakes, Polk Upland Lakes and Lake Wales Ridge Lakes regions. He also presented eight-week mean discharge trends for the Withlacoochee, Hillsborough, Alafia and Peace rivers, and then discussed recent public supply volumes for the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority and the Tampa Bay area.

Mr. Fogel concluded with a review of the near-term climate forecast which shows a 50 – 60% chance of above normal temperatures from August through October 2026, while rainfall for that same period carries equal chances of being above, near or below normal. The extended forecast, shown as rolling three-month composites from September through April, begins with equal rainfall chances for September through November but gradually shifts toward increasing rainfall probabilities as El Niño is expected to strengthen through the winter. The August tropical storm origin map highlights typical formation areas for this month, and a current Atlantic disturbance has a 70% chance of developing within seven days, though several models suggest it may turn northward. Overall, conditions point toward a transition to wetter-than-normal weather later in the year as El Niño becomes more influential.

5. WateReuse Association Industrial Reuse Updates

Bruno Pigott, WateReuse Association Executive Director, provided a WateReuse Association update. The WateReuse Association is the nation's only trade association dedicated solely to advancing laws, policy, funding and public acceptance of drinking water reuse, and continues its longstanding mission of strengthening national water security. Through advocacy, education, outreach and engagement, the organization works to help communities and industries adopt reuse as a core water protection strategy, supported by a broad membership of utilities, businesses and institutions across 38 states.

Key drivers of water reuse in the United States include increasing water stress and rising industrial demand, particularly from sectors such as data centers, microchip manufacturing and energy production. The Association collaborates closely with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, supporting the Water Reuse Action Plan and encouraging industry participation in actions focused on permitting, protein-processing water recycling and decision-making frameworks for reuse in food and beverage operations.

The Association provides extensive educational resources, including monthly webcasts, newsletters, and two major annual events: the Water Reuse Symposium and the Industrial Water Solutions Conference. These gatherings bring together public- and private-sector professionals to share research, present new findings, and advance industrial water reuse solutions. Abstracts are now being accepted for the 2027 Symposium in Las Vegas.

A major initiative highlighted was the Coalition for Water Recycling, which unites Fortune 1000 companies and municipal utilities to advance industrial water reuse. The coalition focuses on water security, cost savings, regulatory compliance and environmental, social and governance goals, while also supporting policy development, tax incentives and collaborative research. Industries represented include food and beverage, automotive, manufacturing, energy and technology.

The Association is also advocating for the Advancing Water Reuse Act, introduced in both chambers of Congress, which proposes a 30% investment tax credit for industrial water reuse systems and related municipal infrastructure. Additional efforts include a pilot recycled water mapping project underway in Texas and Florida, designed to illustrate reuse opportunities nationwide. Interested organizations are encouraged to contact Lydia Silber at the Association to join the coalition and participate in ongoing initiatives.

7. **Water Use Permitting 101**

Jerry Harding, Water Use Evaluation and Compliance Manager, provided an overview of water use permits, the permitting process and water use caution areas. The District's consumptive water use permitting program is established under Chapter 373, Florida Statutes, with two exempt uses: domestic self-supply and facilities certified under the Electrical Power Plant Siting Act. All other uses require either a general permit by rule or an individual permit. General permits apply to small-scale withdrawals below specific thresholds, while individual permits are issued for larger withdrawals, wells exceeding certain diameters, or uses located in regulated areas.

General permits by rule are often misunderstood as exemptions; however, they must still meet all standard permit conditions. Individual permits provide formal documentation of quantities, withdrawal points and conditions. Permit durations typically range from 10 to 20 years, with longer terms available for projects involving reuse or alternative water supplies. All permits must demonstrate reasonable assurance that the use is beneficial, does not interfere with existing legal users and is consistent with the public interest.

The District processes several types of applications, including new permits, renewals, modifications and ownership transfers. Applications may involve preapplication meetings, followed by formal review periods defined in statute. The District consistently meets the Department of Environmental Protection's processing goal of 27 days or less on the District's review clock. Standard and special conditions are applied to ensure metering, reporting, conservation, environmental monitoring and protection of existing legal users.

Three Water Use Caution Areas (WUCAs) exist within the District: the Southern WUCA, Northern Tampa Bay WUCA, and Dover/Plant City WUCA. These areas were designated due to resource concerns such as reduced river flows, declining lake levels and saltwater intrusion. Each WUCA includes special permitting requirements, such as metering thresholds, irrigation quantity limits, restrictions on new Upper Floridan withdrawals, and modeling requirements to protect minimum flows and existing legal users.

The Central Florida Water Initiative (CFWI) overlays portions of Polk and Lake counties and establishes coordinated rules across three water management districts. Within the CFWI, new Upper Floridan Aquifer (UFA) withdrawals are restricted, reflecting increasing reliance on deeper aquifer sources. Regional entities, including the Polk Regional Water Cooperative, are actively developing Lower Floridan Aquifer (LFA) wellfields and exploring additional alternative water supply options under these shared rules.

Ms. Ilia Balcom asked whether an updated organizational chart was available for the committee. Mr. Harding responded that he would provide a link to the District's general webpage in the meeting chat.

Ms. Balcom also requested an update on data center permitting. Mr. Harding explained that the District currently has no water use permit applications identifying water needs for a data center, and no applicants have approached the District regarding an upcoming data center project. He noted that any permit involving water use for a data center is required to be brought before the Board for approval.

Mr. Max Levine asked whether a data center that identifies an alternative water supply as its source of consumptive use would be eligible for any of the grant programs referenced earlier. Mr. Harding responded that such eligibility would not be determined through the regulatory permitting process.

8. **Development of Agenda Topics**
   None.

9. **Announcements and Other Business**
   None.

10. **Adjournment**
    The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.