



Commonwealth of Virginia

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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SUBJECT: Waterbar and Utility Access Road Advisory Committee Meeting #5, Meeting Minutes

Date: December 17, 2025

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) held an advisory committee meeting on December 2, 2025, at 1:00 PM in the Winter Conference Room at the DEQ Piedmont Regional Office, located at 4949-A Cox Road, Glen Allen, VA 23060. The purpose of the meeting was to help DEQ continue the process of reviewing and revising specifications for utility access roads to be included in a future revision to the Virginia Stormwater Management Handbook (VSMH).

The following advisory committee members attended the meeting:

James Eric Clay, Dominion Energy	Jared A. Webb, AEP
Kyle W. Marshall, Williams	

The following advisory committee members were not at the meeting:

Corey Chalmers, EQT	Josh Henry, Williams
Brian Clauto, EQT	Kristin Mahoney, AEP
Stacey Ellis, Dominion Energy	

The following interested members of the public attended the meeting:

Jay Lemmerman, Wetland Studies	Chris Schrinel, Wetland Studies
Rebecca Rochet, Dominion Energy	

The following DEQ staff attended the meeting:

Kathleen (Kay) Alexander, Water Permitting Division	William (Bill) Norris, Division of Policy
Tony Angueira, Office of Stormwater Management	Jaime Robb, Water Operations
Chantz Ballard, Office of Stormwater Management	April Rhodes, Office of Stormwater Management
Margaret Culpepper, Office of Stormwater Management, NRO, Plan Review	Zack Robinson, Office of Stormwater Management
David (Nelson) Daniel, Policy Office	Marshall Willis, Office of Stormwater Management

Welcome and Introductions

DEQ staff opened the meeting by welcoming participants, having everyone in the room introduce themselves, and reviewing the requirements for public meetings under the state’s Freedom of Information Act.

Following the last advisory committee meeting on June 16, 2025, DEQ staff shared proposed revisions to a draft specification for permanent linear utility access roads with the advisory committee members. Prior to this meeting, staff provided a revised version of the draft specification that is dated November 17, 2025. A copy of the revised draft specification is included with the meeting agenda on Town Hall:

https://www.townhall.virginia.gov/L/GetFile.cfm?File=Meeting\103\42647\Agenda_DEQ_42647_v2.pdf

The November 17, 2025, draft specification consists of 8 sections, numbered 1.0 through 8.0, and includes comments that were questions raised by staff and feedback that advisory committee members submitted on the draft specification DEQ shared after the June 16, 2025, meeting. For this meeting, DEQ staff led meeting participants through the November 17, 2025, draft Permanent Linear Utility Access Roads specification, discussing each section, the comments, and other concerns and questions raised by DEQ staff and advisory committee members. Key points and action items are noted below each section heading below:

1.0 Definitions:

- To clarify what a “linear utility” is, within the definition of a “permanent linear utility access road,” DEQ staff and advisory committee members suggested that the definition could use terminology from SB 1178 / HB 2126 (2023 Acts of Assembly Chapters 196 and 197) and § 62.1-44.15:31 of the Code of Virginia that specifies types of linear utilities. (SB 1178 / HB 2126 directed DEQ to include specifications relating to certain activities for stormwater management and erosion and sediment control related to the installation of permanent gravel access roads by an electric utility in the next publication of the Virginia Stormwater Management Handbook.)

2.0 Purpose & Applicability of Best Management Practice:

- Advisory committee members briefly discussed whether “support activities specifically associated with and directly adjacent to the linear utility under construction” should be within the scope of the specification. DEQ staff will review this issue and update the draft specification before the next meeting as needed.

3.0 Planning and Considerations:

- For Section 3.0, advisory committee members and DEQ staff discussed implications for entities that conduct land-disturbing activities under DEQ-approved standards and specifications, what falls within “areas within the limits of disturbance” during construction and prior to restoration, and changing “potential BMPs” (subsection 3 c) to “consider and evaluate the following: ... whether BMPs are necessary...” or, alternatively, deleting subsection 3 c..
- The requirement in subsection 6 d, to “Span the resource without disturbing the bank on either side” was discussed in relation to bridge installation and removal practices.
- DEQ staff will review these issues and update the draft specification for the next meeting as needed.

4.0 Stormwater Performance Summary:

- Advisory committee members recommended revisions to the MS-19 summary that reflect the objective of the draft specification, using “dissipate flow without concentrating it” instead of “drain.” They also discussed the subsection titled “Water Quality Compliance” but deferred the discussion to later in the meeting (see below). DEQ staff will review these issues and update the draft specification as needed for the next meeting.

5.0 Design Criteria:

- Advisory committee members and DEQ staff discussed several topics within section 5.0:
 - Road Width the limitations in the draft specification were taken directly from the 2023 legislation. No revisions were recommended to this part of the draft specification.
 - Drainage Ditches:
 - The group discussed developing a design matrix for roadside ditches similar to waterbars to minimize flows and velocities.
 - Forestry and USDA standards to dissipate flows, such as “turnouts” were reviewed.
 - A cross-reference made to the “Run-On” requirements found in the Handbook may be added to address clean water diversions that are not “new point source” discharges.
- Open-graded angular aggregate size was discussed. It was noted that the sieve size listed should be “No. 16” instead of “No. 8” based on specification table nomenclature.
- Advisory committee members suggested re-inserting the Permanent Right-of-Way Diversion (shown with strike-through in the November 17 draft specification).
- The use of broad-based dips, waterbars and right-of-way diversions was discussed as measures to convey drainage across the roadway.
- Discussion of turnouts and ditch disconnects noted that the requirement to grade the approach to a turnout at a 2% to 3% slope may not be possible, but that slope is needed to minimize velocity. Alternatives and examples will be explored by the committee.

BREAK

4.0 Stormwater Performance Summary - Revisited:

- The advisory committee and DEQ staff discussed Water Quality Compliance and the requirement to acquire nutrient credits, which staff and committee members agreed, can be difficult to obtain. Another concern was raised about gravel access roads not fitting in any of the existing landcover categories in the Virginia Runoff Reduction Method (i.e., impervious, managed turf, mixed/open, and forested). Advisory committee members suggested looking at the permeable pavement guidance.
- The requirements related to Water Quality versus Water Quantity were discussed.
- Comments submitted on February 28, 2025, by Dominion Energy were referenced.

ACTION ITEM: Staff will review the February 28, 2025, comments from Dominion Energy for potential language changes.

ACTION ITEM: Staff asked for input and comments from the Advisory Committee consideration of “Water Quantity” versus “Water Quality” and the potential of obtaining credits for “access roads.”

6.0 Construction Specifications:

- Staff noted that this section needs a lot of work and input from the Advisory Committee.

ACTION ITEM: Staff requested marked up specifications from the Advisory Committee, including language to address the “temporary to permanent conversion” of utility access roads, before the end of the year but preferably between December 19 and 22, 2025.

Next Steps:

- Staff noted that the next meeting of the full Stormwater Handbook Technical Review Committee is scheduled for December 15, 2025. The next meeting (Meeting #6) of the Utility Access Road Advisory Committee will be scheduled for January or February 2026. DEQ staff will contact Advisory Committee members to schedule primary and alternate meeting dates to account for inclement weather.

Public Forum:

- No members of the public requested to speak.

Wrap-Up:

- Staff thanked the meeting participants for their attendance and input.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM.