Washington State Department of Health Office of Drinking Water

Hello Drinking Water Partners:

Many of you have heard me talk about the various personnel changes occurring at the Office of Drinking Water (ODW). With so many leadership positions currently open, I have been considering changes that might better support our staff and our partners in the drinking water business.

The Department of Health (DOH), our division, and our office have unmet needs that demand changes of our organization. We need to find new ways to support our teams; focus on our culture; focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion; ensure training and mentoring support for leaders; and create pathways for upward mobility.

Water systems will also face big challenges over the next decade, including aging infrastructure, changes in management and operation of utilities, over-allocation of water, water contamination, climate change, and consolidation of small systems.

After listening to many staff and leaders within and outside our organization, we decided to reorganize ODW leadership to support our office in new ways and continue to support external partners. I have attached a copy of the organization chart. Here are details of the reorganization.

- There will be one Administrative Operations Deputy Director position to support our office. That position will focus on the administrative business of ODW and agency priorities. This includes human resources, facilities, finance and communication coordination, data management, and performance management.
- The Water Quality Team and the performance management personnel will report to the newly

created Administrative Operations Deputy Director
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- The Engineering and Technical Services Team and the Policy position and Planning teams will report to the Capacity Development and Policy Manager. This position, formerly called the Deputy Director of Central Services, will support outward-facing drinking water issues from the Governor's Office, Department of Commerce, the state Emergency Operations Center, and other policy related issues.
- The Field Operations Deputy Director will transition to the role of Field Operations Manager. This position will focus on our regional office team and ODW partners.

EPH Office Director roles are shifting focus to include more internally driven needs like culture, equity, diversity, and inclusion. I find myself considering the best path forward for the office, for the agency, and for myself as the office director roles are shifting.

As part of the restructuring, I decided to step into the Capacity Development and Policy Manager position on June 2, 2021. The Office of the Assistant Secretary has offered support for these changes. I will continue to support the business while the EPH Policy Director, Joe Laxson, comes in as Acting Director to help with the change management process. Kay Rottell, Assistant Regional Manager in the Southwest Regional Office, agreed to help as the Acting Deputy Director of Administrative Services.

It has been an honor and privilege to serve as the director of this office for the last few years. In my new role, I will have the opportunity to focus on supporting the business of drinking water while continuing the critical work of supporting a smaller group of staff as we manage change. I look forward to continued work with many of you in my role supporting public health, retaining our culture of support for partners in public health, and holding us all accountable to the requirements of state and federal law so we can retain public trust in our drinking water systems.

Sincerely,

Mike Means