

New Draft of 28E/F Agreement Released by West Des Moines Water Works, Des Moines Water Works and the Urbandale Water Utility

On March 30, 2023, Des Moines Water Works (DMWW), Urbandale Water Utility (UWU) and West Des Moines Water Works (WDMWW) jointly released a [second draft of the agreement](#) that, if approved, would establish [Central Iowa Water Works](#) (CIWW), a wholesale regional water production entity founded by the three water works, and nine other metro communities and water districts.

The regional drinking water system would ensure resiliency and redundancy of central Iowa's water production system and provide collaborative management of water resources both now and in the future.

CIWW would not replace or eliminate the water boards or water departments within each community. Each community, under the proposed agreement, will supply water it purchases from CIWW to its retail customers, set its own water rates, operate and maintain its local distribution system, and provide all of its own customer service.

“Getting more than a dozen entities to sit down and talk about water, planning and the future is a formidable task,” said **Christina Murphy**, general manager of West Des Moines Water Works. “We all face many of the same issues and challenges as we look to the future. That includes ensuring we have sufficient supply and treatment to deliver quality drinking water to our communities and customers.”

“This is the first time that regional discussions have proposed a central Iowa production entity that will be governed by its founding members providing them a seat at the table to cooperatively manage our water resources, collaboratively plan for future investments in the system, and equitably share costs,” Murphy continued.

Discussions about developing a regional drinking water authority have been ongoing in the metro for over a decade, becoming more serious and productive among the three board-governed water utilities in 2020, which led to a report that was shared with water departments, cities and rural water providers.

“We have worked together regionally since 1934 when DMWW and the City of Urbandale signed the first agreement to provide drinking water to a suburban community,” said **Dale Acheson**, general manager of the Urbandale Water Utility. “In all the years that we have held these discussions, I can honestly say this is the first time that we have been able to sit down and hammer out an agreement based on mutual give and take.”

CIWW's governing board will work collaboratively to facilitate the growth of the water system for years to come. Coordinated planning of treatment plant expansions and new

treatment plants will benefit the entire region. Moreover, a collaborative regional approach will provide safeguards against natural disasters and more resiliency within the water system during times of drought or water quality challenges. It also provides economies of scale, allowing utilities and providers to deliver water at a lower cost than working independently.

“This effort to establish a regional organization for the future water needs of our community shows the strength of our central Iowa leaders,” said **Jody Smith**, chair of the Planning and Regionalization Committee of West Des Moines Water Works Board of Trustees, who has been active in the exploration of a regional drinking water solution for many years. “We’ve worked together for many years, but we all have valued our independence and responsiveness to the needs of our respective communities. If we come to agreement here, we will all be stronger together.”



John McCune, chair of the Urbandale Water Utility Board of Trustees, supports this effort.

“This draft provides a fair and equitable way of recognizing the investments made over the years by many of the suburban communities, including Urbandale. This draft represents significant progress toward a regional water production entity,” McCune said.

Sue Huppert, vice chair and long-time member of the Des Moines Water Works Board of Trustees, applauds the efforts and the discipline of the development process.

“Des Moines and the entire region have grown significantly since DMWW first started providing water to other communities,” she said. “Looking forward, we are better able to meet the challenge of providing safe drinking water to 600,000 central Iowans if we work together. The benefits for customers and regional partners have been at the forefront of developing this agreement and remain the driving force.”

Potential founding partners for CIWW are expected to review the regional governance agreement over the next few weeks and return comments with the goal of a final agreement being established by the end of 2023.

Public input is encouraged! The public may provide input via email to the Board at comments@wdmww.com.