**Optimization Throughout the Water Cycle Q&A**

**AWOP National Meeting**

**July 19 – 21, 2021**

**1. Rick Lieberman asked about voluntary participation on the wastewater treatment side.**

* Kelly responded that it was a rough start at first. They asked plants to complete a template and return their data. Once non-participants started seeing other utility data being presented at annual workshops, they started sending their data in. The recognition program has also helped increase participation (peer pressure). Aaron added that the ministry has worked with a group of plants to strive for optimized performance. They have provided seed fund­ing to support optimization activities (e.g., Special Studies). There is some thinking that removing more phosphorus will increase their costs. The studies have shown that, “yes, cost might increase slightly, but performance can be improved significantly.”

**2. Aaron: Regarding the PfCW, when systems are entering the partnership, do they typi­cally do it on their own, or is there usually outside technical assistance or other support?**

* Todd: It varies. From personal experience, getting involved as a reviewer familiarized me with the rest of the network and helped everything stick in my mind better. Some utilities form their own teams and do a good job. Pennsylvania is a great example of the state staff being an excellent resource for their systems. For surface water, we have launched mentor­ing programs to help make minor course corrections. We assign them a coach that is a util­ity person to help with questions. Virtual self-assessment refresher sessions have occurred as a result of the pandemic (about every other month). We try to provide support for those that are interested.