

**From:** [dg@ibew965.com](mailto:dg@ibew965.com)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Utility Workers Coalition's Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee Comment  
**Date:** Monday, January 18, 2021 3:11:57 PM  
**Attachments:** SDMAC UWC Comment on Vaccine Prioritization 1.18.21.pdf  
Vaccinations - FERC to CDC 011321 (002).pdf

**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Committee,

I missed adding the FERC letter for reference. It is now attached with our comment as well.

Sincerely,

*Dillon Gorman*

*Assistant Business Mgr.*

**IBEW 965**

**Cell:** 715-570-0308

**Fax:** 608-274-2980

**Office Address:** 701 Watson Avenue #suite 200 Madison, WI 53713

**Website:** [www.ibew965.com](http://www.ibew965.com)



**From:** dg@ibew965.com <dg@ibew965.com>

**Sent:** Monday, January 18, 2021 1:58 PM

**To:** 'DHSSDMAC@dhs.wisconsin.gov' <DHSSDMAC@dhs.wisconsin.gov>

**Subject:** Utility Workers Coalition's Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee Comment

Dear SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee,

Please see attached comment from the Utility Workers Coalition.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the COVID-19 1b distribution proposal.

Sincerely,

*Dillon Gorman*

*Assistant Business Mgr./UWC Chairperson*

**IBEW 965**

**Cell:** 715-570-0308

**Fax:** 608-274-2980

**Office Address:** 701 Watson Avenue #suite 200 Madison, WI 53713

**Website:** [www.ibew965.com](http://www.ibew965.com)



# Utility Workers Coalition

January 18th, 2021

State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee's (SDMAC) Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee

Dear SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the COVID-19 1b distribution proposal.

The Utility Workers Coalition (UWC) represents nearly 10,000 utility workers in Wisconsin. These are the men and women who work daily to build and maintain safe reliable gas and electrical systems. They keep our homes and businesses safely supplied with the energy that is essential to the functioning of a modern society.

We have reviewed the Federal Energy Regulatory Committee's (FERC) letter dated January 13, 2021, addressed to CDC Director Robert Redfield and CDC Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices José Romero, and would like to echo a few of their statements (please see attached). While the energy industry is broad ranging, there is a small sector that are relied upon daily to provide energy to our communities. These workers include highly trained gas and electrical field workers, power plant operators, and transmission and distribution grid operators. These workers have to be on-site to perform their work and are often not afforded the luxury of proper social distancing recommendations.

During this pandemic, utility workers have been the ones who do the work 24/7/365 to make sure other essential workers can do theirs. For these reasons, we suggest including this relatively small sector of the energy industry in the COVID-19 1b vaccine distribution.

Thank you for your opportunity to comment on the vaccine distribution proposal. We understand that identifying and prioritizing essential workers is a difficult task. If you have any questions regarding specifics classifications of utility work that should be prioritized, please feel free to contact us at any time.

Very Truly yours,



Dillon Gorman

Chairman

Utility Workers Coalition

Cell: 715-570-0308

Email: dg@ibew965.com

- Local 12775  
United Steelworkers  
Porter, IN
- Local 99  
Office and Professional Employees  
International Union - Madison, WI
- Local 810  
International Brotherhood of  
Electrical Workers - Muskegon, MI
- Local 150  
International Brotherhood of  
Electrical Workers - St. Anthony, MN
- Local 204  
International Brotherhood of  
Electrical Workers - Cedar Rapids, IA
- Local 965  
International Brotherhood of  
Electrical Workers - Madison, WI
- Local 1147  
International Brotherhood of  
Electrical Workers - Wisconsin Rapids, WI
- Local 2150  
International Brotherhood of  
Electrical Workers - Menomonie Falls, WI
- Local 2334  
International Brotherhood of  
Electrical Workers - Madison, WI
- Local 31  
International Brotherhood of  
Electrical Workers - Duluth, MN
- Local 750  
International Brotherhood of  
Electrical Workers - Eau Claire, WI
- Local 400  
International Union of  
Operating Engineers - Oak Creek, WI
- Local 763  
International Brotherhood of  
Electrical Workers - Omaha, NE
- Local 15  
International Brotherhood of  
Electrical Workers - Downers Grove, IL
- Local 150  
Utility Workers Union of America  
Kalamazoo, MI
- Local 417  
Utility Workers Union of America  
Newport, MI
- Local 1376  
United Brotherhood of  
Carpenters - IN
- Local 1439  
International Brotherhood of  
Electrical Workers - St. Louis, MO
- Local 140  
International Union of  
Operating Engineers - St. Louis, MO

**From:** [Jeff Ecklund](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee Phase 1B  
**Date:** Monday, January 18, 2021 2:29:01 PM  
**Attachments:** Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee.pdf

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Attached

Jeff Ecklund  
Water Superintendent  
Lake Geneva Utility Commission  
361 W. Main St. Lake Geneva WI, 53147  
Office: 262.248.2311  
Mobile: 262.745.9439  
Email: [JECKLUND@LGUTILITIES.ORG](mailto:JECKLUND@LGUTILITIES.ORG)



Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

We urgently request that the essential workers of Wisconsin's drinking water industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredible task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water industry has been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such a fundamental necessity.

The workers of The Lake Geneva Utility Commission never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The water industry requires professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up a water system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. This frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. The water supplied by water utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone: hospital workers, police officers and especially the firefighters, who have no means of fighting a fire if the water has been shut off.

The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and no one can wash their hands without it. The Department of Homeland Security has specifically recognized water workers as essential critical infrastructure workers, and EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler specifically included water workers as essential in writing to the Nation's Governors about the spread of the COVID-19. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to "preserve the functioning of society." It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water. It is a testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver water to their homes—until the water is disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider our workers today.

The Lake Geneva Utility Commission and all of Wisconsin's municipal water utilities are committed to serving our communities. Please consider immediately including the frontline workers of water utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

Jeff Ecklund  
Utilities Superintendent  
Lake Geneva Utility Commission

**From:** [Matthew Trebatoski](#)  
**To:** [DHS-SDMAC](#); [Sen.Bewley@legis.wi.gov](mailto:Sen.Bewley@legis.wi.gov); [Rep.Armstrong - LEGIS](#)  
**Cc:** [Robert Magnus](#); [Joe Pickart](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine for Frontline Utility Workers  
**Date:** Monday, January 18, 2021 2:26:39 PM  
**Attachments:** image001.png  
Letter to State Vaccine Subcommittee.pdf

**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

To whom it may concern:

Thank you,

Matt Trebatoski  
City Administrator  
City of Oconomowoc  
174 E. Wisconsin Avenue  
Oconomowoc, WI 53066  
262-569-2183  
[mtrebatoski@oconomowoc-wi.gov](mailto:mtrebatoski@oconomowoc-wi.gov)



Life comes NATURALLY here

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Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

The line crews and other support employees working in Wisconsin's electric utilities have kept the lights on across our state throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency. That includes the employees of Oconomowoc Public Utilities, one of Wisconsin's 81 municipally-owned electric utilities; 575 drinking water utilities and over 600 sewer / wastewater utilities.

We respectfully ask that, as the final recommendations for COVID-19 Vaccine Priority Group 1B are developed, the mission-essential frontline electric utility workers, water and wastewater utility workers be prioritized along with other first responders, such as firefighters and police officers. (Currently, utility workers, although not explicitly mentioned, appear to be included among "essential workers" in later priority group phases).

The pandemic has directly impacted the way our utility performs critical work. From the outset, we have taken steps to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our employees. For example, many of our electric utility employees are using staggered shifts or smaller teams of mission-essential workers. However, due to the nature of the work and essential training, there are times when these employees need to be in close proximity to each other, making vaccination highly important to the job. Some work activities also require all three classes of employees to be in the community conducting field work, which also increases their potential exposure to the virus.

Utility workers are critical to not only the state's economy but also in supporting the healthcare sector's life-saving treatments, keeping people connected as they continue to socially distance and work from home, and more. Providing safe drinking water to Medical facilities to treat patients of course removing the waste streams and avoiding back ups into homes and businesses! Mission-essential workers are a subset of our workforce and are responsible for the fundamental processes and facilities that keep the lights on and energy flowing. These employees are highly specialized and do not have the option to work from home or in isolation from others on the job site.

Oconomowoc Utilities and our 33 employees and all of Wisconsin's municipal electric, water and wastewater / sewer utilities are committed to serving our communities. We respectfully ask that our employees be given priority for the vaccine in order to continue delivering the critical services our customers rely on and need. Thank you for considering our input and for your work in planning for a smooth and effective rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Sincerely,

Robert P. Magnus  
Mayor – City of Oconomowoc

**From:** [Szopinski, Aaron](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Comment from Mayor Tom Barrett on Draft Phase 1B Guidance  
**Date:** Monday, January 18, 2021 2:07:49 PM  
**Attachments:** SDMAC Phase 1B Jan 18 2021.pdf

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Ms. McCamy:

Please see the enclosed comments from Mayor Tom Barrett on the Draft Phase 1B guidance for both the Subcommittee's review tomorrow as well as the full Committee's meeting this week.

Thank you.

**Aaron Szopinski**

*Policy Director*

Office of Mayor Tom Barrett

414.286.3384p

414.708.0394c

Learn more about Milwaukee's response to Covid-19 via [Milwaukee Health Dept.](#)

[Sign up for weekly updates](#) on Covid-19 health orders and gating criteria

Visit [milwaukee.gov/mayorbarrett](http://milwaukee.gov/mayorbarrett) for Mayor Barrett's links to critical job and city services

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**Tom Barrett**  
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

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January 18, 2021

State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee  
Subcommittee on Vaccines  
Department of Health Services  
1 W. Wilson Street  
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Chairs Lewandowski, Temte, and Honorable Members of the Subcommittee:

This letter is in response to the recently released draft proposal for Covid-19 vaccine priority in the State's 1B phase of vaccination.

The City of Milwaukee is pleased that the Subcommittee increased emphasis on use of socioeconomic criteria including race, income, and community disease burden in Phase 1B. Communities of color in Milwaukee have consistently shown higher disease incidence, and for black Milwaukeeans, higher rates of death. Milwaukee residents working in "essential" business as defined in State and local public health orders are more likely to be black or brown. It is only right that vaccine distribution priorities include those whose vaccination will provide the greatest reduction in harm for them and those they work and live with.

It is disappointing to see that the Subcommittee does not include more public-facing local government employees in Phase 1B. Prior communications to the City from experts serving and advising both the Subcommittee and the Food & Drug Administration's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice (ACIP) proposed that those who work in public facing "essential" businesses should be included in Phase 1B.

Another concern for local governments across the State, and especially in Milwaukee, is upcoming elections in February and April. Free and fair elections require access to the polls, and many voters still prefer to exercise their right to vote in-person. The City of Milwaukee will provide them a safe voting experience, as we have three times already since the start of the pandemic.

Our election workers are not full-time employees. They are retirees and residents who sign up to ensure that their fellow residents are able to vote and our elections are free and fair. Milwaukee and many other Wisconsin communities already have challenges finding enough volunteers to run elections. Including public-facing election workers in Phase 1B will not only increase their confidence to volunteer again, it will help ensure the free and fair conduct of our coming elections.

Like health care workers, teachers, police officers and firefighters, these public-facing employees are a known and very accessible population for vaccination. The City of Milwaukee Health Department has done a wonderful job rapidly assembling and starting a high-volume vaccine clinic at the Wisconsin Center in downtown Milwaukee.

The Health Department is confident in its ability to administer at least 3,000 doses per week if vaccine is provided. That means the City of Milwaukee has the capacity to vaccinate public-facing City employees and accommodate ongoing vaccination of unaffiliated Phase 1A health care workers as requested by the State Department of Health Services.

Prompt vaccination for these critical employees is something we can accomplish quickly. Vaccinating these public-facing workers ensures that Milwaukee and other communities around the state can reliably provide elections and other critical services.

Thanks again to you and your fellow committee members for your commitment and hard work to ensure vaccine is delivered effectively and ethically to all Wisconsin residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Barrett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "T".

Tom Barrett  
Mayor

**From:** [IBEW Local2304](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC; dg@ibew965.com](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Utility Workers Coalition's Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee Comment  
**Date:** Monday, January 18, 2021 2:07:02 PM

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Thanks, Dillon! DAVE

On Monday, January 18, 2021, 1:58:21 PM CST, <dg@ibew965.com> wrote:

Dear SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee,

Please see attached comment from the Utility Workers Coalition.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the COVID-19 1b distribution proposal.

Sincerely,

*Dillon Gorman*

*Assistant Business Mgr./UWC Chairperson*  
**IBEW 965**

**Cell:** 715-570-0308

**Fax:** 608-274-2980

**Office Address:** 701 Watson Avenue #suite 200 Madison, WI 53713

**Website:** [www.ibew965.com](http://www.ibew965.com)





**From:** [Adam Sonntag](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** vaccine subcommittee - Phase 1b  
**Date:** Monday, January 18, 2021 2:00:50 PM

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**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

Comment regarding Phase 1b vaccination prioritization in Wisconsin:

I applaud the subcommittee for recommending the inclusion of police, fire, and other non-EMS first responders in phase 1b of the state's COVID-19 vaccination plan. I ask that the subcommittee further expand this category to essential municipal employees across the state. This includes infrastructure, utility, public works, election, and other local government essential employees. Plow truck drivers, water and sewer operators, and other municipal employees are equally as essential to the residents of this state. It is common as it is the case in Hillsboro to have 1 (maybe 2) employees responsible for critical services like water and snow removal. Interruptions in these services have a significant impacts on the residents of this state, including health, sanitation, safety, travel, and the local economy. This category of essential worker has been excluded at this point and should be considered a priority. Inoculating prisoners as your plans show over essential municipal employees is unfortunate.

Thanks,  
**Adam D. Sonntag**  
City Administrator  
Hillsboro, WI  
[admin@hillsborowi.com](mailto:admin@hillsborowi.com)  
(608)489-2350



**From:** [dg@ibew965.com](mailto:dg@ibew965.com)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Utility Workers Coalition's Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee Comment  
**Date:** Monday, January 18, 2021 1:58:28 PM  
**Attachments:** SDMAC UWC Comment on Vaccine Prioritization 1.18.21.pdf

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Dear SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee,

Please see attached comment from the Utility Workers Coalition.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the COVID-19 1b distribution proposal.

Sincerely,

*Dillon Gorman*

*Assistant Business Mgr./UWC Chairperson*

**IBEW 965**

**Cell:** 715-570-0308

**Fax:** 608-274-2980

**Office Address:** 701 Watson Avenue #suite 200 Madison, WI 53713

**Website:** [www.ibew965.com](http://www.ibew965.com)





**From:** [Lois Frank - The Village of Cambria](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee - Phase 1B  
**Date:** Monday, January 18, 2021 1:25:25 PM

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I would like the Vaccine Subcommittee to please add to the definition of the Public-Facing Essential Workers Municipal Clerks, Municipal Treasurers and election poll workers. We have an election in February and April this year so it is paramount to protect those that need to administer the in-person absentee voting so they do not get sick prior to administering election day voting and also to protect those that serve on election day. Municipal Treasurers are also in the process of collecting taxes from their residents as well as utility bills. Both the Municipal Clerks and Municipal Treasurers must deal with public daily and play an essential role in keeping municipalities functioning. I implore you to add these groups to the Public-Facing Essential Workers so it is clear that they can obtain the protection needed to continue doing their essential jobs.

Thank you,  
Lois Frank MMC, WCPC, CMTW  
Clerk/Treasurer  
Village of Cambria (pop. 767)  
111 West Edgewater Street  
P.O. Box 295  
Cambria, WI 53923  
P- 920-348-5443  
F- 920-348-6050  
[cambria@centurytel.net](mailto:cambria@centurytel.net)

**From:** [Cinda L. Johnson](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Joseph Owen](#)  
**Subject:** Phase 1B Vaccine Subcommittee Comments - Village of Muscoda  
**Date:** Monday, January 18, 2021 12:58:04 PM  
**Attachments:** Covid 19 vaccine letter.pdf

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To Whom It May Concern,

Attached is a letter asking that municipal employees to be into Phase 1B for Covid vaccinations.

*Thank You,  
Cinda Johnson  
Administrator Clerk-Treasurer  
Village of Muscoda  
PO Box 206  
Muscoda, WI 53573  
Phone: 608-739-3182  
Grant & Iowa Counties  
Population 1241*



## *Village of Muscoda*

206 N Wisconsin Ave., PO Box 206

Muscoda, WI 53573

(608)739-3182 FAX (608)739-3183

email: [cljohnson@wppienergy.org](mailto:cljohnson@wppienergy.org)

[www.muscoda.com](http://www.muscoda.com)

January 18, 2021

Dear Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Subcommittee,

I appreciate the complexity of the decisions surrounding COVID-19 vaccine prioritization and recognize the efforts of the Subcommittee to ensure an equitable distribution. I submit these comments to advocate for adding municipal utility employees to Phase 1b of the vaccine distribution rollout.

The Village of Muscoda and its Utility provides critical electric, water and wastewater services to our community. As essential frontline utility workers, we are highly specialized, provide necessary services and must be available to work 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

We are not able to work from home and have gone to extreme lengths to keep employees safe and ensure continuity of the critical services we provide the community. However, our daily exposure to customers and the nature of our duties - which often requires that we work in teams - makes vaccination highly important to maintain the utility system.

Exposure to the virus by our essential workers could be catastrophic, as it has the potential to disrupt community services such as electricity, water, and wastewater. This could affect spaces such as homes, schools, daycare facilities, manufacturing companies, restaurants, grocery stores, medical clinics and government facilities. I would like to highlight the fact that this list potentially includes facilities that distribute the vaccine and keep it at the low temperature necessary for safe storage.

We respectfully request that municipal electric, water, and wastewater workers be eligible to receive the vaccine in Phase 1b.

Your consideration of this urgent request is appreciated. Thank you for the time and effort you are spending to ensure Wisconsin is well prepared to vaccinate efficiently and effectively.

On behalf of the Village of Muscoda and Muscoda Utilities,

*Cinda Johnson*

Village Administrator

**From:** [Scott Osborn](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Joe Pickart](#); [Robert Kincaid](#); [Posnik, Anthony - MUN](#)  
**Subject:** COVID vaccination prioritization - Vaccine Subcommittee (Phase 1B)  
**Date:** Monday, January 18, 2021 11:37:49 AM

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**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

We urgently request that the essential workers of Wisconsin’s drinking water industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredible task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water industry has been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such a fundamental necessity.

The workers of City of Oconomowoc Utilities never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The water industry requires professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up a water system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. This frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. The water supplied by water utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone: hospital workers, police officers and especially the firefighters, who have no means of fighting a fire if the water has been shut off.

The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and no one can wash their hands without it. The Department of Homeland Security has specifically recognized water workers as essential critical infrastructure workers, and EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler specifically included water workers as essential in writing to the Nation’s Governors about the spread of the COVID-19. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to “preserve the functioning of society.” It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water. It is a testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver water to their homes—until the water is disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider our workers today.

City of Oconomowoc Utilities and all of Wisconsin’s municipal water utilities are committed to serving our communities. Please consider immediately including the frontline workers of water utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

**Scott Osborn, P.E.**  
Water Superintendent



City of Oconomowoc Utilities

808 S Worthington St.

Oconomowoc, WI 53066

Main Office: 262.569.2196

Direct : 262.569.6421

[sosborn@oconomowoc-wi.gov](mailto:sosborn@oconomowoc-wi.gov)

**From:** [Kloetzke, Travis](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee, Phase 1B inclusion FOND DU LAC WATER UTILITY  
**Date:** Monday, January 18, 2021 11:31:59 AM

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**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

We urgently request that the essential workers of Wisconsin’s drinking water industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredible task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water industry has been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such a fundamental necessity.

The workers of Fond du Lac Water Utility never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The water industry requires professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up a water system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. This frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. The water supplied by water utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone: hospital workers, police officers and especially the firefighters, who have no means of fighting a fire if the water has been shut off.

The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and no one can wash their hands without it. The Department of Homeland Security has specifically recognized water workers as essential critical infrastructure workers, and EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler specifically included water workers as essential in writing to the Nation’s Governors about the spread of the COVID-19. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to “preserve the functioning of society.” It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water. It is a testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver water to their homes—until the water is disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider our workers today.

Fond du Lac Water Utility and all of Wisconsin’s municipal water utilities are committed to serving our communities. Please consider immediately including the frontline workers of water utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

**Travis Kloetzke**

---





**Water Utility General Manager**

Office: (920) 322-3683

Cell: (920) 539-5743

[tkloetzke@fdl.wi.gov](mailto:tkloetzke@fdl.wi.gov)

**From:** [Schillinger, Patrick J](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccination Recommendations  
**Date:** Monday, January 18, 2021 10:57:09 AM  
**Attachments:** WEC vaccination letter.pdf

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On behalf of WEC Energy Group – WE Energies and Wisconsin Public Service Corporation – please find the attached memo with recommendations on a subset of utility workers we feel should be included in the State’s vaccination guidelines.

Thank you for your consideration.

Pat

Patrick Schillinger  
WEC Energy Group  
Vice President State Legislative & Local Affairs  
office: 920.433.1511  
mobile: 920.634.9501  
[patrick.schillinger@wecenergygroup.com](mailto:patrick.schillinger@wecenergygroup.com)

**To: Wisconsin Department of Health Services**

**From: WEC Energy Group – WE Energies/Wisconsin Public Service Corp.**

**Re: Comments on COVID-19 Vaccination Priority for Utility Workers**

**Date: January 18, 2021**

On behalf of WEC Energy Group’s investor-owned utilities in Wisconsin – WE Energies and Wisconsin Public Service Corporation – we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the vaccination priority ranking by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

Over the course of the past year, our employees have worked tirelessly to keep the lights and heat on in face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their work ensures the functioning of our State’s critical infrastructure.

We understand the State is determining priorities for vaccination. We recognize the complex task this entails as you manage to balance limited vaccine doses for our State’s population.

As you review and update your recommendations, we urge you to consider a subset of the energy workforce be included in Phase 1b – specifically the following power generation and customer service areas of our companies:

- Power Operations Control Center Operator
- Remote Operations Control Center Operator
- Power Plant Control Room Operator
- District Energy Service Mechanic
- Gas and Electric Control operators/dispatchers
- Gas and Electric First Responders
- Gas and Electric SCADA Techs
- Liquefied Natural Gas Plant Operators
- Substation Electricians
- Special Testing Techs

This is a very limited, highly trained, and specialized subset of our employee base, but they are vital to the state’s efforts to successfully confront the impacts of COVID-19. They can neither quarantine nor work from home and are needed on a 24/7 basis.

Safe, reliable and affordable energy is necessary to allow Wisconsin’s citizens to maintain social distancing, work from home and remain in their limited household groups. It is also essential in keeping businesses operating in order to build and grow a strong economy.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that these utility personnel be included in the scope of priority personnel in Phase 1b of Wisconsin’s vaccination plan for COVID-19.

**From:** [Tim Putz](#)  
**To:** DHS SDMAC  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee and Phase 1B  
**Date:** Monday, January 18, 2021 10:26:31 AM  
**Attachments:** image001.png  
image004.png

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**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

The line crews and other support employees working in Wisconsin's electric utilities have kept the lights on across our state throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency. That includes the employees of Arcadia Utilities, one of Wisconsin's 81 municipally-owned electric utilities; 575 drinking water utilities and over 600 sewer / wastewater utilities.

We respectfully ask that, as the final recommendations for COVID-19 Vaccine Priority Group 1B are developed, the mission-essential frontline electric utility workers, water and wastewater utility workers be prioritized along with other first responders, such as firefighters and police officers. (Currently, utility workers, although not explicitly mentioned, appear to be included among "essential workers" in later priority group phases).

The pandemic has directly impacted the way our utility performs critical work. From the outset, we have taken steps to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our employees. For example, we have split our employees into smaller teams that report to separate locations. However, due to the nature of the work and essential training, there are times when these employees need to be in close proximity to each other, making vaccination highly important to the job. Some work activities also require all three classes of employees to be in the community conducting field work, which also increases their potential exposure to the virus.

Utility workers are critical to not only the state's economy but also in supporting the healthcare sector's life-saving treatments, keeping people connected as they continue to socially distance and work from home, and more. Providing safe drinking water to Medical facilities to treat patients of course removing the waste streams and avoiding backups into homes and businesses! Mission-essential workers are a subset of our workforce and are responsible for the fundamental processes and facilities that keep the lights on and energy flowing. These employees are highly specialized and do not have the option to work from home or in isolation from others on the job site.

Arcadia Utilities and our employees and all of Wisconsin's municipal electric, water and wastewater / sewer utilities are committed to serving our communities. We respectfully ask that our employees be given priority for the vaccine in order to continue delivering the critical services our customers rely on and need. Thank you for considering our input and for your work in planning for a smooth and effective rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Sincerely,

**Tim Putz**

Superintendent  
Arcadia Electric Utility  
115 S. Jackson Street  
Arcadia, WI 54612

(P) 608-323-7347 (C) 608-863-0787

(E) [electricsupt@cityofarcadiawi.com](mailto:electricsupt@cityofarcadiawi.com)



**ARCADIA  
ELECTRIC UTILITY**  
*City of Arcadia*



**From:** [Don Piepgras](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee Phase 1b comments  
**Date:** Monday, January 18, 2021 9:32:12 AM

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Comments of St. Croix Gas on the Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee's recommendations for inclusion in Phase 1b of the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out.

St. Croix Gas is a natural gas distribution utility headquartered in River Falls, Wisconsin and regulated by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin. I am writing the committee today to urge them to include front-line natural gas utility workers in Phase 1b of the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out. As a natural gas utility, we have an obligation to assure public safety in the delivery of natural gas to homes and businesses.

This often requires employees to enter homes to identify and determine the source of potential gas leaks. The employees responding to these emergency calls have no choice but to enter homes or businesses to make sure there is no danger to public safety. If the occupant of a home has COVID-19, we can't just leave. We have to enter to investigate and make the home safe for the occupants. Even though they wear face masks while on the job, this still puts our front-line employees at significant risk for exposure to COVID-19, much like other first responders. If an employee were to contract COVID-19 due to exposure during a leak call investigation, that employee could easily spread it to other employees, putting at risk our company's ability to respond to any emergencies. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to revise your recommendations for Phase 1b to include front-line natural gas utility employees.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Don Piepgras  
President  
St. Croix Gas  
415 S 2<sup>nd</sup> St  
River Falls, WI 54022

(715) 425-6177



**From:** [Spencer, Matthew](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee - Phase 1B - Comments from Madison Gas and Electric Co.  
**Date:** Monday, January 18, 2021 9:30:54 AM  
**Attachments:** Public Comments on Phase 1B of Wisconsin's Vaccination Distribution Plan Ltr - 01182021.pdf

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**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

Good Morning,

Attached are comments from Madison Gas and Electric Co. (MGE) to the Vaccine Subcommittee relating to the recommendations for COVID-19 Vaccine Priority Group 1B. MGE requests that our utility personnel, specifically those employees directly involved with the generation, transmission and distribution of electricity and natural gas, and water operations be included in Phase 1B of Wisconsin's Vaccination Plan. We estimate the number of our employees that perform these critical functions to be approximately 325 at MGE and approximately 2,500 statewide.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Matthew Spencer  
Government Affairs Manager  
Madison Gas & Electric  
608-252-7962

**From:** [Weston Arndt](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Wiedenfeld, Noah](#)  
**Subject:** Phase 1B Vaccine Subcommittee Comments – New Richmond Utilities  
**Date:** Monday, January 18, 2021 9:00:58 AM

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Dear Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Subcommittee,

I appreciate the complexity of the decisions surrounding COVID-19 vaccine prioritization and recognize the efforts of the Subcommittee to ensure an equitable distribution. I submit these comments to advocate for adding municipal utility employees to Phase 1b of the vaccine distribution rollout.

New Richmond Utilities provides critical electric, water, and wastewater services to our community. As essential frontline utility workers, we are highly specialized, provide necessary services and must be available to work 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

We are not able to work from home and have gone to extreme lengths to keep employees safe and ensure continuity of the critical services we provide the community. However, our daily exposure to customers and the nature of our duties - which often requires that we work in teams - makes vaccination highly important to maintain the utility system.

Exposure to the virus by our essential workers could be catastrophic, as it has the potential to disrupt community services such as electricity, water, and wastewater. This could affect spaces such as homes, schools, daycare facilities, manufacturing companies, restaurants, grocery stores, medical clinics and government facilities. I would like to highlight the fact that this list potentially includes facilities that distribute the vaccine and keep it at the low temperature necessary for safe storage.

We respectfully request that municipal electric, water, and wastewater workers be eligible to receive the vaccine in Phase 1b.

Your consideration of this urgent request is appreciated. Thank you for the time and effort you are spending to ensure Wisconsin is well prepared to vaccinate efficiently and effectively.

Sincerely,

**Weston Arndt** | *Electric Superintendent*

[New Richmond Utilities](#)

**direct:** 715.243.0437 **mobile:** 715.829.5505

156 E 1<sup>st</sup> Street, New Richmond, WI 54017

**Mon-Thu** 7:00am-4:30pm **Fri** 7:00am-11:30am

Follow our [Twitter](#) and Like our [Facebook](#)

**From:** [Tony Wieczorek](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee Phase 1B  
**Date:** Monday, January 18, 2021 8:40:20 AM

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Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

The line crews and other employees working in Wisconsin's electric utilities have kept the lights on across our state throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency. That includes the employees of Wisconsin Dells Water and Light, one of Wisconsin's 81 municipally-owned utilities.

We respectfully ask that, as the final recommendations for COVID-19 Vaccine Priority Group 1B are developed, the mission-essential frontline electric utility workers be prioritized along with other first responders, such as firefighters and police officers. (Currently, utility workers, although not explicitly mentioned, appear to be included among "essential workers" in later priority group phases).

The pandemic has directly impacted the way our utility performs critical work. From the outset, we have taken steps to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our employees. For example, many of our electric utility employees are using staggered shifts or smaller teams of mission-essential workers. However, due to the nature of the work and essential training, there are times when these employees need to be in close proximity to each other, making vaccination highly important to the job. Some work activities also require electric employees to be in the community conducting field work, which also increases their potential exposure to the virus.

Utility workers are critical to not only the state's economy but also in supporting the healthcare sector's life-saving treatments, keeping people connected as they continue to socially distance and work from home, and more. Mission-essential workers are a subset of our workforce and are responsible for the fundamental processes and facilities that keep the lights on and energy flowing. These employees are highly specialized and do not have the option to work from home or in isolation from others on the job site.

Wisconsin Dells Water and Light and all of Wisconsin's municipal electric utilities are committed to serving our communities. We respectfully ask that our employees be given priority for the vaccine in order to continue delivering the critical services our customers rely on. Thank you for considering our input and for your work in planning for a smooth and effective rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Sincerely,

Tony Wieczorek  
Superintendent  
Wisconsin Dells Water and Light

**From:** [Brad Montag](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Phase 1b vaccine subcommittee  
**Date:** Saturday, January 16, 2021 8:30:47 PM

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It is important not to overlook employees working in the utilities such as power generation, electric line, and natural gas distribution. I feel it is very important to include this group in phase 1b

Thank you

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone  
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

**From:** [Teresa DeLong](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Phase 1B recommendations  
**Date:** Saturday, January 16, 2021 11:36:47 AM

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**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

Good morning,

The current pace of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout is frightening, and as my municipality faces community spread and now the new, more contagious variant, the possibility of my staff not being able to provide State-mandated, vital municipal services to our residents is very real.

West Salem provides the following vital services to the public: Drinking water, wastewater collection and treatment, plowing and maintenance of streets, and administration of elections.

I implore the Committee to broadly enable each Wisconsin municipality to determine which of their employees qualify as front-line and non-frontline essential workers critical to the continuation of operations of the municipality, and are, therefore, eligible under Phase 1b for the COVID-19 vaccine.

West Salem is a small municipality with a barebones staff of eleven municipal workers who serve in crucial functions. These employees are difficult to quickly replace, and without whom important public services could not continue. I need each and every employee. In addition to our sparse police department of nine officers and one police secretary, I have VERY essential workers eligible for the vaccine under Phase 1b.

I urge the Committee, at a minimum, to include the following frontline and non-frontline essential municipal workers in Phase 1b, based on the essential nature of their jobs, difficulty in quickly identifying trained replacements, and other unique circumstances of their duties:

1. **Operators of municipal water and wastewater systems.** Many Wisconsin municipalities are small in population like West Salem and have one or two staff trained and licensed to operate their water and wastewater systems. These individuals cannot be replaced quickly should they become infected with the COVID-19 virus. Providing safe, clean drinking water to municipal residents and treating wastewater before it is discharged to the State's surface waters are essential functions that must be performed 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year without lapse.
2. **Public works employees.** West Salem public works staff are responsible for plowing, maintaining, and keeping open local street networks so that police, fire, and ambulances can quickly and efficiently respond to emergencies, employees can get to work, and commerce can proceed. Trained and CDL-certified snowplow operators and other public works staff are not easily and quickly replaced.
3. **Municipal clerks, deputy clerks, and poll workers.** Municipal clerks and their staff are the most public facing of all essential municipal employees. They interact with the public more than any other municipal position. Most importantly, they administer elections. Two elections will be conducted this winter and spring, One in February and

one in April. The unique role that clerks play in running our election process requires them to be in contact with the public, not just on election day, but also for the two weeks prior to election day when in-person absentee voting is conducted. The vast majority of poll workers are retired elderly citizens. Each election since this pandemic began, we face the challenge of staffing our elections due to the vulnerability of election poll workers and staff.

The Village of West Salem strongly urges the Committee to include the above three groups of essential municipal workers in vaccine priority group 1b. I appreciate the opportunity to submit my comments to you, and I thank you very kindly for considering my urgent message.

Teresa L. DeLong  
Village Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer  
Village of West Salem  
175 Leonard Street South  
West Salem, WI 54669  
(608) 786-1858  
Population: 5,045

**From:** [Dennis Grambort](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccinations  
**Date:** Saturday, January 16, 2021 7:19:23 AM

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I am 65. 37 years as a lineman for a power company. When disasters hit , we worked 16 hour days. Seven days a week. Hurricane work took 2 months some times.

I will wait my turn.

Please get the folks that work in schools vaccinated. This affects everyone.

Can you use volunteers?

Don't worry about vaccinators giving shots that would otherwise be wasted, to people not quite fitting the category. Instead, fire people who refuse to bend the rules. Unused vials in a dumpster are stupid.

Thank You,  
Dennis Grambort

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10



**From:** [Ken Maccaux](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Phase 1b vaccinations  
**Date:** Saturday, January 16, 2021 5:31:48 AM

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Hi, i am a snowplow driver for a large Green Bay city and i think DPW workers should get vaccinated soon because no one goes anywhere until i stay up all night to do my job. Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Luke Diaz](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Comment on COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 9:59:38 PM

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Hello,

I just wanted to add my agreement to the League of Wisconsin Municipalities proposal below. I think it will help ensure critical services are maintained for Wisconsin residents.

Thank you for your time.

Luke  
Verona Mayor

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**To:** Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee  
**From:** Curt Witynski, J.D, Deputy Executive Director, League of Wisconsin Municipalities  
**Date:** January 15, 2021

The League of Wisconsin Municipalities represents nearly 600 cities and villages of all sizes throughout the state struggling with the continuing impacts of the pandemic, including the pace of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. We appreciate the opportunity to offer the following comments on the Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee's recommendations for COVID-19 Vaccine Priority Group 1b.

In addition to police and fire, Wisconsin cities and villages provide the following vital services to the public: drinking water, wastewater collection and treatment, plowing and maintenance of streets, and administration of elections. On behalf of our members, we urge the committee to broadly enable each municipality to determine which of their employees qualify as front-line and non-frontline essential workers critical to the continuation of operations of the municipality and therefore eligible under Phase 1b for the COVID-19 vaccine. The leaders of each municipality are in the best position to determine what municipal workers serve crucial functions, are difficult to quickly replace, and without whom important public services could not continue. We seek local flexibility for determining who, in addition to police and fire, should be included in the list of essential workers eligible for the vaccine under Phase 1b. The list will vary by community depending on the size of the municipal staff and resources available.

If it is impractical or not possible for the committee to delegate to municipal leaders the ability to determine which municipal employees should be prioritized for the vaccine under Phase 1b, we urge the committee, at a minimum, to include the following frontline and non-frontline essential municipal workers in Phase 1b, based on the essential nature of their jobs, difficulty in quickly identifying trained replacements, and other unique circumstances of their duties:

1. **Operators of municipal water and wastewater systems.** Many Wisconsin municipalities are less than 1,500 in population and have one or two staff trained and licensed to operate their water and wastewater systems. These individuals cannot be replaced quickly should they become infected with the COVID-19 virus. Providing safe, clean drinking water to municipal residents and treating wastewater before it is discharged to the state's surface waters are essential functions that must be performed 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year without lapse.
2. **Public works employees.** City and village public works staff are responsible for plowing, maintaining, and keeping open local street networks so that police, fire, and ambulances can quickly and efficiently respond to emergencies, employees can get to work, and commerce can proceed. Trained snowplow operators, foresters, and other public works staff are not easily and quickly replaced.
3. **Municipal clerks, deputy clerks, and poll workers.** Municipal clerks and their staff are the most public facing of all essential municipal employees. They interact with the public more than any other municipal position. Most importantly, they administer elections. Two elections will be conducted this winter and spring, One in February and one in April. The unique role that clerks play in running our election process requires them to be in contact with the public, not just on election day, but also for the two weeks prior to election day when in-person absentee voting is conducted.

The League urges the committee to include the above three groups of essential municipal workers in vaccine priority group 1b.

The League appreciates the opportunity to file these comments. Thank you for considering them.

\*\*\*\*\*

Curt Witynski, J.D.  
Deputy Executive Director  
League of Wisconsin Municipalities  
office: (608) 267-3294  
cell: (608) 354-3003  
[www.lwm-info.org](http://www.lwm-info.org)

**From:** [gbtaco](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccines for Public Work Employees  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 9:52:08 PM

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To whom it may concern:

I work for the Dept of Public Works in the Green Bay area. My co workers and I take care of snow plowing so all essential and non essential people can get to work. I agree with police and fire getting vaccine before us but i believe we should be after them. Please take my email seriously because weve been putting the hours in making our community as safe as can be and we need the vaccine to continue that.

Thanks for your time.

Public Works Employees

Sent from my Galaxy

**From:** [Joseph Owen](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Templeton, Carrie E - PSC](#); [Mike Peters](#); [Tim Heinrich](#)  
**Subject:** Phase 1B Vaccine Subcommittee Comments – WPPI Energy & MEUW  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 6:43:17 PM  
**Attachments:** WPPI MEUW Comments COVID Vaccine Prioritization Jan 2021.pdf  
Letter to Governor Evers Signed by Secretary Brouillette.pdf

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**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

Dear DHS COVID Vaccine Subcommittee,

Thank you for the tremendous effort you are undertaking to ensure the COVID vaccine is distributed effectively in Wisconsin. Please see the attached comments from WPPI Energy and the Municipal Electric Utilities of Wisconsin (MEUW) in support of including certain highly skilled and highly specialized critical electric grid infrastructure employees in phase 1B of Wisconsin’s COVID Vaccine prioritization schedule. I have also attached a letter to Governor Evers from US Department of Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette in support of this request.

Thank you for your consideration and for the work you are doing for all of us in Wisconsin.

Joseph Owen  
Director of Government Affairs

WPPI Energy  
1425 Corporate Center Dr.  
Sun Prairie, WI 53590  
608.834.4517  
[www.wppienergy.org](http://www.wppienergy.org)



1425 Corporate Center Drive Sun Prairie, WI 53590-9109 608.834.4500 [wppienergy.org](http://wppienergy.org)

**To: Wisconsin Department of Health Services**

**From: Mike Peters, President & CEO, WPPI Energy and Tim Heinrich, Executive Director, Municipal Electric Utilities of Wisconsin**

**Re: Comments on COVID-19 Vaccination Priority for Municipal Utility Workers**

**Date: January 15, 2021**

On behalf of the 81 municipally-owned Wisconsin electric utilities, WPPI Energy and the Municipal Electric Utilities of Wisconsin (MEUW) appreciate the opportunity to comment on COVID-19 vaccination prioritization and we support giving front line health care workers and others that are most at-risk top priority for COVID 19 vaccinations.

The mission essential employees of WPPI Energy and Wisconsin’s municipal electric utilities have worked throughout the COVID-19 crisis to keep the lights on across Wisconsin. They deliver a service that by all accounts is critical to the health and safety of Wisconsin’s citizens and its businesses, including those providing medical and vaccine-related services.<sup>1</sup> We urge that, as the final version of the Wisconsin COVID-19 Vaccination Plan is developed, the mission essential workers employed by WPPI Energy and Wisconsin’s 81 municipal electric utilities be prioritized in Phase 1B of vaccine distribution.

**We estimate the number of mission essential workers to be approximately 510.**

The mission essential employees of WPPI Energy and Wisconsin’s 81 municipal electric utilities are critical to the state’s economy, supporting the healthcare sector’s lifesaving treatments, keeping people connected as they continue to socially distance and work from home, and more. Mission essential workers are a subset of our workforce that are responsible for the fundamental processes and facilities that ensure electricity is reliably and safely generated, distributed, and available for consumption. These employees are highly specialized, cannot work remotely, and must be available to work 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It is for these reasons that we respectfully request the final version of the Wisconsin COVID-19 Vaccination Plan include these mission essential workers in the Phase 1B scope of the Vaccination Plan. Thank you for your consideration of our input and for your work in planning for a smooth and effective rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine.

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<sup>1</sup> The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin has noted that “the risk posed to residential customers and their communities of removing those customers’ access to the services needed to abide by hygiene standards and “social distancing” guidelines will be of such a serious nature that prohibiting disconnection will continue to be necessary to prevent injury to the interests of the people.” September 29, 2020 Supplemental Order on Residential Disconnection – Second, Docket No. 5-UI-120, PSC DOC# 397476.

January 14, 2021

The Honorable Tony Evers  
Governor of Wisconsin  
115 East State Capitol  
Madison, Wisconsin 53702

Dear Governor Evers:

As you might recall, I sent you two letters regarding the importance of essential critical infrastructure workers within the energy sector and nuclear matters in March and May 2020 regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. While initial concerns were surrounding the prioritization of personal protective equipment, recent efforts have focused on vaccine prioritization for our critical infrastructure workforce. This issue is vital to maintaining the safe and efficient energy services that have continued to sustain our Nation's economy during this challenging time, as well as ensuring essential energy services to meet national security commitments to the Federal Government and U.S. Military. I am now asking that the critical infrastructure workforce in both the public and private sector, including those at the Department of Energy's (DOE) Power Marketing Administrations (PMAs) and National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) sites, are prioritized for receipt of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The electric power industry, including the Nation's investor owned utilities, municipal-owned utilities, cooperatives, and the Department's PMAs, provide 24-7/365 electricity, necessary for the health and safety of all Americans. These critical electric infrastructure utility workers support and preserve the infrastructure and operations centers critical to maintaining the backbone of the electric grid. By prioritizing their health and safety for vaccine distribution alongside other frontline workers, we assure electricity distribution to the Nation's rural and urban communities.

Essential critical infrastructure workers, as designated in the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) *Memorandum On Identification Of Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers During COVID-19 Response*,<sup>148</sup> at the PMAs and NNSA sites conduct highly specialized tasks and cannot work from home or in isolation from others on the job site. The PMAs operate electric systems and sell the electrical output of Federally-owned and -operated hydroelectric dams in 34 States; their employees operate facilities that are needed to maintain the reliability and security of the Nation's energy grid. Similarly, NNSA's essential workers handle a range of issues including nuclear weapon systems, global and

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<sup>148</sup> DHS CISA Memorandum On Identification Of Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers During COVID-19 Response: <https://www.cisa.gov/publication/guidance-essential-critical-infrastructure-workforce>

potential domestic nuclear security threats, the management and disposal of hazardous nuclear materials, and the safe and secure transport of nuclear materials. These individuals continue to work every day, putting both themselves and their families' safety at risk in service of our Nation.

Prioritizing vaccination access for mission-essential workers is consistent with guidance contained in the October 2, 2020, *Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine*, by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine<sup>149</sup>, and the October 29, 2020, *COVID-19 Vaccination Program Interim Operational Guidance for Jurisdictions Playbook*, by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.<sup>150</sup> These reports recommend critical infrastructure workers be considered for prioritization based upon job function and exposure to risk.

The PMAs' and NNSA's mission-essential workers must receive the vaccine through the States and territories, and therefore I respectfully ask that States and territories also include Federal energy workers along with private energy sector workers as a high priority for voluntary access to initial inoculation. Such work is critical to public health and safety, as well as our economic and national security.

President Trump's highest priority has always been to preserve the health, safety, and wellbeing of the American people. DOE remains dedicated to working closely with governors, mayors, county officials, and tribal leaders to ensure the safety of the workforce and the continued operation and security of the energy sector in support of our Nation's economy and the safety of our citizens.

Sincerely,



Dan Brouillette

<sup>149</sup> Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine: <https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/a-framework-for-equitable-allocation-of-vaccine-for-the-novel-coronavirus>

<sup>150</sup> COVID-19 Vaccination Program Operational Guidance The COVID-19 Vaccination Program Interim Operational Guidance for Jurisdictions Playbook <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/covid19-vaccination-guidance.html>



**From:** [Polenske, Jeffrey S.](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Dettmer, Karen](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee - Phase 1B Comments  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 5:42:38 PM  
**Attachments:** CPW - Water Supt DHS Letter.pdf

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Members of the Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee,

Please see the attached letter with our comments and request to have Essential Public Works employees included as a part of the Phase 1B vaccination priority.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment,

**Jeffrey S. Polenske, PE** | Commissioner of Public Works | City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works  
841 North Broadway, Room 501 | Milwaukee, WI 53202 | (414)286-3301 | [jpolen@milwaukee.gov](mailto:jpolen@milwaukee.gov)

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Department of Public Works

Jeffrey S. Polenske, P.E.  
Commissioner of Public Works

Karen Dettmer, P.E.  
Water Superintendent

Patrick Pauly, P.E.  
Water Administration Manager

January 14, 2021

As the Wisconsin Department of Health Services continues to develop plans for distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine, we are writing to request that our public works staff, which includes water works, garbage collection, and other frontline critical infrastructure personnel, receive priority in Phase 1B. This phase previously included “people who play a key role in keeping essential functions of society running and cannot socially distance in the workplace,” as described in the Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention’s *COVID-19 Vaccination Program Interim Playbook for Jurisdiction Operations*. We were disappointed to learn that the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recently moved our frontline emergency responders to Phase 1C recommendations.

We recognize that with limited supply to states and uncertainty in the exact number of vaccines available in the future, DHS and advising entities are faced with very difficult decisions as they prioritize distribution in Wisconsin. It is indisputable that health care and emergency medical service workers must be first to receive the vital protection the vaccination has been shown to provide. We also know there is irrefutable evidence that individuals living in elder care facilities have been significantly impacted by the pandemic and must be prioritized.

Generally, it is easy for the public to understand the critical nature of police and fire in emergency response, but often the discussion of first responders leaves behind critical infrastructure workforce. Public works employees have been recognized nationally as first responders and work side by side with police and fire emergency responders during emergencies. They respond 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to emergency situations for the health, safety and well-being of the public.

Police and fire operations rely on these workers to keep the public way clear of snow and ice for rapid emergency response, provide well maintained and working water hydrant service to extinguish fires, and assist with traffic control during emergencies. Our community not only relies on these workers to support these critical police and fire operations, but also relies on us to provide safe, continuous services for drinking water treatment and distribution, storm and sewer water removal and treatment, garbage collection, street lighting and traffic control operations, street maintenance and many other necessities that are not often front of mind.

Public works is the lifeline to the community. Water and wastewater services are fundamental to hospitals and long-term care facilities. Our water employees cover three shifts a day for around-the-clock, safe drinking water to sustain daily living needs and protect the health of the public.

Frank P. Zeidler Municipal Building, 841 N. Broadway, Room 409, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202-3681  
Phone: (414) 286-3492 • Fax: (414) 286-2672 • [milwaukee.gov/water](http://milwaukee.gov/water)  
American Water Works Association, Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies, Water Research Foundation, U.S. Water Alliance



Without reliable, sustainable water and wastewater service, fire, medical and long-term care providers could not deliver their life-saving services. Additionally, transportation infrastructure is fundamental for individuals requiring emergency care and response. The specialized skills, licenses, and technical knowledge necessary for public works operations cannot be immediately replaced or backfilled when staff cannot report to work due to illness or the need to care for a sick family member.

Throughout the pandemic, we have worked to ensure the safest conditions possible for our workforce and to minimize possible workplace exposure to COVID-19. Early on, when information and guidance became available on the contagious spread of the virus, we implemented policies and safety protocols to aid in the health and safety of our workers and the community they serve. We have written protocols for safely providing the many services we deliver, such as entering properties to restore water service. We have installed barriers in our customer service centers to ensure calls for information and service are answered. We have relocated personnel that are required to report to work to new locations in order to physically distance from coworkers. We have continuously and unequivocally secured safety and cleaning supplies. Despite these measures that have undoubtedly assisted in protecting the health and safety of our essential workers, we have seen significant absences due to employees experiencing symptoms or testing positive for COVID-19, having to quarantine due to a close contact exposure, or needing to stay home to tend to a child or take care of a sick family member. These COVID-19 related absences create a significant risk to the stability of our workforce and the reliability of our department to support police and fire operations, collect garbage, and provide important public infrastructure and utility services that are critical for the health, safety and well-being of the public.

Over the last ten months of this pandemic, public works staff have continued to provide many of our community's most essential services and it is imperative that they are considered a part of our community's first responders. As such, we request that essential public works personnel be included as a part of Wisconsin's Phase 1B vaccination priority category. This high level of vaccination priority will be essential to the continued successes of our public works personnel and their efforts to deliver services that protect the health, safety and well-being of the community.



Karen Dettmer, P.E., Superintendent  
Milwaukee Water Works



Jeffrey S. Polenske, P.E., Commissioner  
Department of Public Works

*Karen Dettmer, P.E. is Superintendent of the City of Milwaukee Water Works in the Department of Public Works, which provides drinking water service to over 860,000 customers in the City of Milwaukee and 16 surrounding communities in Milwaukee, Ozaukee, and Waukesha counties, including the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center.*

*Jeffery S. Polenske, P.E. is Commissioner of the Department of Public Works at the City of Milwaukee, overseeing all Infrastructure, Operations, and Water Works services for the city.*



**From:** [Troy Adams](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Cardona, Mary - MEUW](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee / Phase 1B for Essential Employees  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 4:30:26 PM

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Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

It is hard to imagine life without electricity. And, is anything more important to a functioning society than clean water? The line crews and other support employees working in Wisconsin's electric utilities have kept the lights on across our state throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency. And, water utility workers have never stopped working, despite the pandemic. This includes the employees of Manitowoc Public Utilities, one of Wisconsin's 81 municipally-owned electric utilities, 575 drinking water utilities, and more than 600 wastewater utilities.

We respectfully ask that, as the final recommendations for COVID-19 Vaccine Priority Group 1B are developed, the mission-essential frontline electric utility workers, water utility workers, and wastewater utility workers be prioritized along with other first responders, such as firefighters and police officers.

The pandemic has directly impacted the way our utility performs critical work. From the beginning, we have taken steps to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our employees. For example, many of our utility employees are using staggered shifts or smaller teams of mission-essential workers. These employees are highly specialized and do not have the option to work from home or in isolation from others on the job site. With regards to the pandemic, their frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other.

Manitowoc Public Utilities, our 93 employees, and all of Wisconsin's municipal electric, water and wastewater utilities are committed to serving our communities. We respectfully ask that our employees be given priority for the vaccine in order to continue delivering the critical services our customers rely on and need. Thank you for considering our input and for your work in planning for a smooth and effective rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Best regards,  
Troy Adams

**Troy Adams P.E. | General Manager**  
**Manitowoc Public Utilities**  
920-686-4377 | [Direct Line](#)

-----  
1303 S. 8<sup>th</sup> Street | P.O. Box 1090 | Manitowoc, WI 54221  
(920) 686-4348 fax | [www.mpu.org](http://www.mpu.org)

*Community Owned ... Customer Focused*

**From:** [Curt Witynski](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Toni Herkert](#); [Jerry Deschane](#); [Emily McFarland](#) \_\_\_\_\_; [Todd Schmidt](#)  
**Subject:** vaccine subcommittee, Phase 1B, Comments of League of Wisconsin Municipalities  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 3:52:30 PM

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**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

**To:** Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Subcommittee  
**From:** Curt Witynski, J.D, Deputy Executive Director, League of Wisconsin Municipalities  
**Date:** January 15, 2021

The League of Wisconsin Municipalities represents nearly 600 cities and villages of all sizes throughout the state struggling with the continuing impacts of the pandemic, including the pace of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. We appreciate the opportunity to offer the following comments on the Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee’s recommendations for COVID-19 Vaccine Priority Group 1b.

In addition to police and fire, Wisconsin cities and villages provide the following vital services to the public: drinking water, wastewater collection and treatment, plowing and maintenance of streets, and administration of elections. On behalf of our members, we urge the committee to broadly enable each municipality to determine which of their employees qualify as front-line and non-frontline essential workers critical to the continuation of operations of the municipality and therefore eligible under Phase 1b for the COVID-19 vaccine. The leaders of each municipality are in the best position to determine what municipal workers serve crucial functions, are difficult to quickly replace, and without whom important public services could not continue. We seek local flexibility for determining who, in addition to police and fire, should be included in the list of essential workers eligible for the vaccine under Phase 1b. The list will vary by community depending on the size of the municipal staff and resources available.

If it is impractical or not possible for the committee to delegate to municipal leaders the ability to determine which municipal employees should be prioritized for the vaccine under Phase 1b, we urge the committee, at a minimum, to include the following frontline and non-frontline essential municipal workers in Phase 1b, based on the essential nature of their jobs, difficulty in quickly identifying trained replacements, and other unique circumstances of their duties:

1. **Operators of municipal water and wastewater systems.** Many Wisconsin municipalities are less than 1,500 in population and have one or two staff trained and licensed to operate their water and wastewater systems. These individuals cannot be replaced quickly should they become infected with the COVID-19 virus. Providing safe, clean drinking water to municipal residents and treating wastewater before it is discharged to the state’s surface waters are essential functions that must be performed 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year without lapse.
2. **Public works employees.** City and village public works staff are responsible for plowing, maintaining, and keeping open local street networks so that police, fire, and ambulances can quickly and efficiently respond to emergencies, employees can get to work, and commerce can proceed. Trained snowplow operators, foresters, and other

public works staff are not easily and quickly replaced.

3. **Municipal clerks, deputy clerks, and poll workers.** Municipal clerks and their staff are the most public facing of all essential municipal employees. They interact with the public more than any other municipal position. Most importantly, they administer elections. Two elections will be conducted this winter and spring, One in February and one in April. The unique role that clerks play in running our election process requires them to be in contact with the public, not just on election day, but also for the two weeks prior to election day when in-person absentee voting is conducted.

The League urges the committee to include the above three groups of essential municipal workers in vaccine priority group 1b.

The League appreciates the opportunity to file these comments. Thank you for considering them.

\*\*\*\*\*

Curt Witynski, J.D.  
Deputy Executive Director  
League of Wisconsin Municipalities  
office: (608) 267-3294  
cell: (608) 354-3003  
[www.lwm-info.org](http://www.lwm-info.org)

**From:** [Jill Weiss](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#); [Rep.Hebl - LEGIS](#); [Sen.Agard@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Sen.Agard@legis.wisconsin.gov)  
**Cc:** [Cardona, Mary - MEUW](#); [Brian Hoops](#); [Tim Swadley](#); [Gillingham, Amy - MUN](#)  
**Subject:** "Vaccine Subcommittee" / "Phase 1B for Essential Employees"  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 3:31:10 PM  
**Attachments:** Vaccine Subcommittee - Essential Workers Phase 1B - Stoughton Utilities Request for Utility Priorization.pdf

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Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

The electric line crews, water operators, wastewater operators and other supporting utility employees working in Wisconsin's electric/water/wastewater utilities have kept the lights on, the clean water flowing and the waste treated across our state throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency. That includes the employees of Stoughton Utilities, one of Wisconsin's 81 municipally-owned electric utilities; 575 drinking water utilities and over 600 sewer / wastewater utilities.

We respectfully ask that, as the final recommendations for COVID-19 Vaccine Priority Group 1B are developed, the mission-essential frontline electric utility workers, water and wastewater utility workers be prioritized along with other first responders, such as firefighters and police officers. (Currently, utility workers, although not explicitly mentioned, appear to be included among "essential workers" in later priority group phases).

The pandemic has directly impacted the way our utility performs critical work. From the outset, we have taken steps to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our employees. For example, our electric utility employees are working separately and as necessary in two-member teams of mission-essential workers. However, due to the nature of the work and essential training, there are times when these employees need to be in close proximity to each other, making vaccination highly important to the job. Additionally, work activities require all three classes of utility employees to be in the community conducting field work, which also increases their potential exposure to the virus.

Utility workers are critical to not only the state's economy but also in supporting the healthcare sector's life-saving treatments, keeping people connected as they continue to socially distance and work from home, and more. The services we provide are essential to care facilities but moreover are essential to life and life supporting systems. Providing safe drinking water to medical facilities to treat patients and, of course, removing the waste streams and avoiding backups into homes and businesses. Any breakdown in our ability to provide these services can be catastrophic to our customers without the compounding issue of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Our employees are highly specialized and most do not have the option to work from home or in complete isolation from others to maintain the infrastructure necessary to keep the lights on, the clean safe drinking water flowing, and removal and treatment of waste.

Stoughton Utilities, our 24 employees, and all of Wisconsin's municipal electric, water and wastewater / sewer utilities are committed to serving our communities. We respectfully ask that our employees be given priority for the vaccine in order to continue delivering the critical services that

are life sustaining and our customers count on. Thank you for considering our input and for your work in planning for a smooth and effective rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine.

If you have any questions regarding this letter or the essential services we provide, please contact me at (608) 877-7423 or via email at [jweiss@stoughtonutilities.com](mailto:jweiss@stoughtonutilities.com).

Sincerely,  
STOUGHTON UTILITIES  
Jill M. Weiss

**Jill M. Weiss, P.E. | Utilities Director**

Stoughton Utilities  
600 South Fourth Street  
Stoughton, WI 53589  
608.877.7423  
920.650.6888  
[jweiss@stoughtonutilities.com](mailto:jweiss@stoughtonutilities.com)



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**Stoughton Utilities**

600 South Fourth Street  
P.O. Box 383  
Stoughton, WI 53589-0383

*Serving Electric, Water & Wastewater Since 1886*

January 15, 2021

Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

The electric line crews, water operators, wastewater operators and other supporting utility employees working in Wisconsin's electric/water/wastewater utilities have kept the lights on, the clean water flowing and the waste treated across our state throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency. That includes the employees of Stoughton Utilities, one of Wisconsin's 81 municipally-owned electric utilities; 575 drinking water utilities and over 600 sewer / wastewater utilities.

We respectfully ask that, as the final recommendations for COVID-19 Vaccine Priority Group 1B are developed, the mission-essential frontline electric utility workers, water and wastewater utility workers be prioritized along with other first responders, such as firefighters and police officers. (Currently, utility workers, although not explicitly mentioned, appear to be included among "essential workers" in later priority group phases).

The pandemic has directly impacted the way our utility performs critical work. From the outset, we have taken steps to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our employees. For example, our electric utility employees are working separately and as necessary in two-member teams of mission-essential workers. However, due to the nature of the work and essential training, there are times when these employees need to be in close proximity to each other, making vaccination highly important to the job. Additionally, work activities require all three classes of utility employees to be in the community conducting field work, which also increases their potential exposure to the virus.

Utility workers are critical to not only the state's economy but also in supporting the healthcare sector's life-saving treatments, keeping people connected as they continue to socially distance and work from home, and more. The services we provide are essential to care facilities but moreover are essential to life and life supporting systems. Providing safe drinking water to medical facilities to treat patients and, of course, removing the waste streams and avoiding backups into homes and businesses. Any breakdown in our ability to provide these services can be catastrophic to our customers without the compounding issue of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Our employees are highly specialized and most do not have the option to work from home or in complete isolation

from others to maintain the infrastructure necessary to keep the lights on, the clean safe drinking water flowing, and removal and treatment of waste.

Stoughton Utilities, our 24 employees, and all of Wisconsin's municipal electric, water and wastewater / sewer utilities are committed to serving our communities. We respectfully ask that our employees be given priority for the vaccine in order to continue delivering the critical services that are life sustaining and our customers count on. Thank you for considering our input and for your work in planning for a smooth and effective rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine.

If you have any questions regarding this letter or the essential services we provide, please contact me at (608) 877-7423 or via email at [jweiss@stoughtonutilities.com](mailto:jweiss@stoughtonutilities.com).

Sincerely,  
STOUGHTON UTILITIES

*Jill M. Weiss*

Jill M. Weiss, P.E.  
Utilities Director

**From:** [Martin Moyer](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee phase 1B public comment  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 2:59:01 PM

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**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

We urgently request that the essential workers of Wisconsin’s drinking water industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredible task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water industry has been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such a fundamental necessity.

The workers of the City of Brookfield Water Utility never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The water industry requires professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up a water system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. This frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. The water supplied by water utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone: hospital workers, police officers and especially the firefighters, who have no means of fighting a fire if the water has been shut off.

The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and no one can wash their hands without it. The Department of Homeland Security has specifically recognized water workers as essential critical infrastructure workers, and EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler specifically included water workers as essential in writing to the Nation’s Governors about the spread of the COVID-19. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to “preserve the functioning of society.” It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water. It is a testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver water to their homes—until the water is disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider our workers today.

The city of Brookfield Water Utility and all of Wisconsin’s municipal water utilities are committed to serving our communities. Please consider immediately including the frontline workers of water utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

Martin Moyer

Water Superintendent – City of Brookfield  
19700 Riverview Drive  
Brookfield, WI 53045  
(262)787-3783 (office)  
(262)289-5684 (mobile)

**From:** [Eddie Sheppard](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee - Phase 1B Request  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 2:58:09 PM  
**Attachments:** image003.png

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**City of Shawano**  
Eddie Sheppard, City Administrator  
127 S. Sawyer Street, Shawano, 54166  
(715) 526-6138 Fax: (715) 526-5751

Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

We urgently request that the essential workers of Wisconsin’s drinking water industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredible task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water industry has been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such a fundamental necessity.

The workers of City of Shawano Water Utility never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The water industry requires professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up a water system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. This frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. The water supplied by water utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone: hospital workers, police officers and especially the firefighters, who have no means of fighting a fire if the water has been shut off.

The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and no one can wash their hands without it. The Department of Homeland Security has specifically recognized water workers as essential critical infrastructure workers, and EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler specifically included water workers as essential in writing to the Nation’s Governors about the spread of the COVID-19. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to “preserve the functioning of society.” It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water. It is a testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver water to their homes—until the water is disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider our workers today.

The City of Shawano Water Utility and all of Wisconsin’s municipal water utilities are committed to

-serving our communities. Please consider immediately including the frontline workers of water utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

Eddie Sheppard  
City Administrator  
City of Shawano

Eddie Sheppard  
City Administrator  
127 S. Sawyer St.  
Shawano, WI 54166  
Office: (715) 526-6151  
Cell: (785) 760-5455

**From:** [msullivan@water.oak-creek.wi.us](mailto:msullivan@water.oak-creek.wi.us)  
**To:** DHS SDMAC  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee Phase 1B Comment  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 2:47:05 PM

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Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

We urgently request that the essential workers of Wisconsin’s drinking water industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredible task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water industry has been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such a fundamental necessity.

The workers of the Oak Creek Water and Sewer Utility never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The water industry requires professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up a water system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. This frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. The water supplied by water utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone: hospital workers, police officers and especially the firefighters, who have no means of fighting a fire if the water has been shut off.

The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and no one can wash their hands without it. The Department of Homeland Security has specifically recognized water workers as essential critical infrastructure workers, and EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler specifically included water workers as essential in writing to the Nation’s Governors about the spread of the COVID-19. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to “preserve the functioning of society.” It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water. It is a testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver water to their homes—until the water is disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider our workers today.

Oak Creek Water and Sewer Utility and all of Wisconsin’s municipal water utilities are committed to serving our communities. Please consider immediately including the frontline workers of water utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

**Mike Sullivan**

General Manager

[msullivan@water.oak-creek.wi.us](mailto:msullivan@water.oak-creek.wi.us)

Office: (414) 570-8200 x19

Cell: (414) 416-5886

Oak Creek Water and Sewer Utility

170 W. Drexel Avenue

Oak Creek, WI 53154



**From:** [Mary Jo Lange](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Frank Miller](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee - Phase 1B  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 2:28:14 PM  
**Attachments:** Cudahy Water Utility Comment - COVID Vaccination Prioritization.pdf

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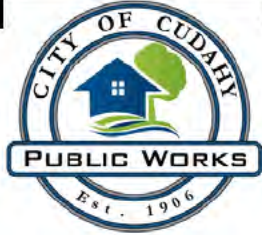
**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

**Mary Jo Lange, P.E.**  
Director of Public works/City Engineer  
City of Cudahy Engineering Department  
5050 S. Lake Dr.  
Cudahy, WI 53110  
langemj@ci.cudahy.wi.us  
Office: (414) 769-2253

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**CITY OF CUDAHY**  
**DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS**

5050 S. LAKE DRIVE  
P.O. BOX 100510  
CUDAHY, WI 53110-6108  
Email: [langemi@ci.cudahy.wi.us](mailto:langemi@ci.cudahy.wi.us)  
(414)769-2253

January 15, 2021

RE: COVID Vaccine Prioritization


Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

We urgently request that the essential workers of Wisconsin's drinking water industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredible task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water industry has been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such a fundamental necessity.

The workers of the Cudahy Water Utility never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The water industry requires professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up a water system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. This frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. The water supplied by water utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone: hospital workers, police officers and especially the firefighters, who have no means of fighting a fire if the water has been shut off.

The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and no one can wash their hands without it. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to "preserve the functioning of society." It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water. It is a testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver water to their homes—until the water is disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider our workers today.

The Cudahy Water Utility and all of Wisconsin's municipal water utilities are committed to serving our communities. Please consider immediately including the frontline workers of water utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,  
  
Mary Jo Lange, PE  
Director of Public Works  
City of Cudahy Water Utility

**From:** [TSwadley@ci.stoughton.wi.us](mailto:TSwadley@ci.stoughton.wi.us)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** COVID-19 vaccine-feedback  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 2:13:46 PM

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Thank you for seeking feedback regarding the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine. We would like to see the 1B category include clerks, poll workers, snow plow drivers, utility line workers, water and wastewater operators as first responders.

We appreciate your efforts under these difficult and demanding times.

Tim Swadley  
Mayor-City of Stoughton  
207 S. Forrest St.  
608-873-6459

“Committed to You and Your Community”

**From:** [Nicolas Kumm](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Cardona, Mary - MEUW](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee Phase 1B  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 2:00:48 PM

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Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

We respectfully request that the essential workers of Wisconsin's electric and water municipal utilities be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for COVID-19 vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredible task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water and electric municipal utilities has been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such fundamental necessities.

The workers of Marshfield Utilities has never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The pandemic has directly impacted the way our utility performs critical work. From the outset, we have taken steps to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our employees. For example, our electric and water utility employees are using staggered shifts, working out of different locations, and smaller teams of mission-essential workers.

Due to the nature of the work and essential training, there are times when these employees need to be in close proximity to each other. Some work activities require frequent contact with the public, including entering homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is safe to consume. Work activities also require employees to be in the community conducting field work, which also increases their potential exposure to the virus. These employees do not have the option to work from home or in isolation from others on the job site. The water and electric industry requires professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up each system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice and training.

The water and electricity supplied by municipal utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone. The extended disruption of either water or electric service could be disastrous to the health of the public. This is compounded even further due to the current winter conditions. Utility workers are critical to not only the state's economy but also in supporting the healthcare sector's life-saving treatments, keeping people connected as they continue to socially distance and work from home, and more. Providing safe drinking water and electricity to Medical facilities to treat patients is of critical importance as well!

Marshfield Utilities and all of Wisconsin's municipal electric and water utilities are committed to serving our communities. Please consider immediately including the workers of water and electric municipal utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input and for your work in planning for a smooth and effective rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Sincerely,

Nick

**Nicolas E. Kumm**

General Manager

Marshfield Utilities

P 715-898-2101 | C 715-305-3810

2000 South Central Ave. | P.O. Box 670 | Marshfield, WI 54449



From: [Shawn Stauske](#)  
To: [DHS SDMAC](#)

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**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

To the DHS SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

I've read the PDF titled, "SDMAC VDS Phase 1b Recommendations FOR PUBLIC COMMENT" that was available on publicmeetings.wi.gov. I'm writing to encourage consideration of including in Phase 1B vaccinations also certified waterworks operators.

Appendix D of the Phase 1B draft plan includes a statement of occupations categorized as critical infrastructure, and specifically mentions occupations within the First Responder category. An advisory memo dated March 28, 2020 from Christopher C. Krebs, then Dir. CISA, recognized that water and wastewater workers are essential to continued critical infrastructure.

Our Water and Sewer Utility crew members cannot work remotely, and are required to enter residential and commercial properties for scheduled water meter replacements and cross-connection control inspections. Utility crew members are also often required to work in teams to maintain water well and sanitary sewer pumping station equipment.

Staff available for this critical work is limited to highly trained and credentialed waterworks operators. The City of Middleton (pop. 21,050) has 8 Utility crew members capable of doing this work. During the pandemic, despite rigorous protocol changes, we have had periods during which a Utility crew member has had to quarantine or isolate. Fortunately, illness hasn't swept through the crew, and none of our Utility crew members has died of the disease. That said, we do have experience that prolonged absence of a Utility staff member limits the ability of the remaining crew to keep up with routine tasks needed to ensure a reliable supply of water for drinking and firefighting, and to promote public health associated with sanitary sewerage services.

Because N95 masks have been prioritized for our first responders, Utility crew wear regular cloth masks as are commonly used by the general public. While this is our best protection available (combined with frequent hand washing, and distancing as possible), there remains a high risk to the community of maintaining water and sanitary sewer

systems if several Utility crew members were to become ill at the same time.

At this time of year, we have a plan for Public Works crews to provide snow plowing operations, including the potential to augment the crew with CDL drivers from other departments, or to limit timely plowing of local roads if needed. We have no such backup plan available for our waterworks operators – they simply cannot be replaced on short notice, and we cannot limit their duties. I'll add that waterworks operators are easy to identify, since they carry cards with their credentials, so they can be proactively contacted and they can provide proof of identity and occupation for the vaccination.

Thanks,  
Shawn Stauske  
City of Middleton  
Dir. Public Works / City Engineer  
(608) 821-8381



**From:** [Alan Wildman](#)  
**Cc:** [Sen.Erpenbach - LEGIS](#); [Rep.Considine - LEGIS](#)  
**Subject:** "Vaccine Subcommittee" / "Phase 1B for Essential Employees"  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 1:25:15 PM  
**Attachments:** image002.png

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Members of the State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee (SDMAC) Vaccine Subcommittee:

The line crews and other support employees working in Wisconsin's municipal public utilities have kept the lights on and water flowing across our state throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency. That includes the employees of Village of Prairie du Sac Utilities, one of Wisconsin's 81 municipally-owned electric utilities; 575 drinking water utilities and over 600 wastewater utilities.

We respectfully ask that, as the final recommendations for COVID-19 Vaccine Priority Group 1B are developed, the mission-essential frontline electric, water and wastewater utility workers be prioritized along with other first responders, such as firefighters and police officers.

The pandemic has directly impacted the way our utility performs critical work. From the outset, we have taken steps to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our employees. However, due to the nature of the work and essential training, there are times when these employees need to be in close proximity to each other or the public, making vaccination highly important to the job. Some work activities also require all three classes of employees to be in the community conducting field work, such as entering homes, businesses, and medical facilities, which also increases their potential exposure to the virus.

Utility workers are critical to not only the state's economy but also in supporting the healthcare sector's life-saving treatments, keeping people connected as they continue to socially distance and work from home, and more. Providing safe drinking water to medical facilities to treat patients, keeping the electricity on to keep vaccines refrigerated, removing the waste streams, and avoiding back ups into homes and businesses! Mission-essential workers are a subset of our workforce and are responsible for the fundamental processes and facilities that keep the lights on and water flowing. These employees are highly specialized and do not have the option to work from home or in isolation from others on the job site.

The Village of Prairie du Sac, our employees, and all of Wisconsin's municipal electric, water and wastewater utilities are committed to serving our communities and keeping them safe. We respectfully ask that our employees be given priority for the vaccine in order to continue delivering the critical services our customers rely on and need. Thank you for considering our input and for your work in planning for a smooth and effective rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Sincerely,

Alan R. Wildman, II  
Village Administrator  
Village of Prairie du Sac  
335 Galena Street



Prairie du Sac, WI 53578

(608) 643-2421

[www.prairiedusac.net](http://www.prairiedusac.net)



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**From:** [Tim Clay](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee Phase 1B  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 1:15:48 PM  
**Attachments:** FERC Phase 1B Comments.pdf  
Electric Cooperative Phase 1B Public Comments.pdf

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**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

Attached are our comments pertaining to the Vaccine Subcommittee's proposed make-up of the Phase 1B vaccination group. Thanks for considering our comments in your important work!

**Tim Clay** | VP of Operations | Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association  
222 W. Washington Ave., Suite 680 | Madison, WI 53703 | [www.weca.coop](http://www.weca.coop)  
[tim@weca.coop](mailto:tim@weca.coop) | 608-467-4598 (direct) | 608-576-6864 (cell)



January 15, 2021

State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee  
Wisconsin Department of Health Services  
1 West Wilson Street  
Madison, WI 53703

Re: Comments on Vaccine Subcommittee's Phase 1B Recommendations

The Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association represents all 24 of the state's electric distribution cooperatives that deliver power to 587,000 people who predominantly live in the state's rural areas. Dairyland Power Cooperative operates power plants and transmission lines to supply most of the cooperative system's wholesale power needs. Like all electric utilities, rural electric cooperatives exist to provide electricity to consumers. However, electric cooperatives operate as not-for-profit utilities and their consumers are also the owners of the cooperative.

These comments are in response to the Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee's<sup>1</sup> proposal for inclusion of persons in Phase 1B of the state's vaccination plan. We are ***requesting inclusion of essential electric utility workers*** in Phase 1B to reduce the risk of disruption to the electric grid.

The Department of Homeland Security classifies electric utility employees as "essential." They operate and maintain powerlines and facilities that are considered critical infrastructure that is vital for the safety, health, and welfare of Wisconsinites. In some situations, state statutes classify and electric utility workers are first responders to vehicle accidents involving powerlines. EMS personnel cannot help those injured until the risk of downed powerlines has been eliminated.

In nearly all major natural disasters, early recovery efforts are first focused on establishing command and control, followed by the restoration of power since virtually everything we use requires electricity. Electricity powers pumps that provide drinking water; allows waste treatment plants to operate; runs furnace fans and controllers, motor fuel dispensers, refrigeration, core telecommunications systems, computers, hospitals, and so on. It may not always be obvious why the continuity of electric service is vital. That is because our industry works hard to make sure it is always available with the flip of a switch, without users giving it a second thought—that is, until an outage.

<sup>1</sup> A subcommittee of the State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee.

The pandemic has had an impact on our electric cooperative members with several employees contracting the disease. Deployed mitigation strategies have, so far, been effective in maintaining continuity of electric service. However, these mitigation measures have been successful largely because the emphasis has been on maintaining a functioning electric system. Certain mitigation strategies will not be possible if the emphasis switches to restoring power following a significant storm event. In this circumstance, electric utility workers will have to work directly with each other as well as interact with affected consumers without power, and potentially other emergency responders.

Our cooperative members are generally small in comparison to other electric utilities in the state—most have fewer than 25 employees. If there is a significant weather event, mutual aid agreements will be activated to rebuild powerlines and restore customer service connections. Electric workers will be drawn from other cooperatives in the state and the Midwest if necessary. This introduces new populations to our employee base and uncertainty as to what, if anything, the responding crews have done to mitigate against the spread of COVID-19.

Every year in our state ice, snow and wind storms; tornadoes; straight-line winds and other natural events lead to power interruptions that can be sometimes last for days, even weeks, especially in forested rural areas. Perhaps the industry's greatest concern is an ice storm event that could easily out strip the state's utility resources and result in prolonged outages.

Prolonged power outages in the winter are a concern for several reasons:

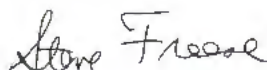
- Without power, people cannot shelter in their home for long. Local emergency management offices must open local warming shelters that will undoubtedly increase the risk of contracting COVID-19 for those affected.
- There will be fewer electric crews available to help with recovery efforts.
  - The implementation of utility-specific COVID-19 mitigation measures will result in fewer utilities participating in mutual aid programs. A survey we undertook showed a 60% reduction in electric utilities' willingness to participate in cross-state mutual aid activities. Utilities need their workers to be healthy for maintaining their own system and are reluctant to send their crews to help another utility restore power due to the pandemic.
  - Our analysis of several hurricane events this summer shows that accommodations (lodging in particular) must be 50% greater to maintain social distancing. This is problematic in rural areas where these resources are already limited.
  - A probable result of the pandemic is that it will take long to restore power after significant storm events. This is due to lost efficiencies with the implementation of COVID-19 mitigation measures, and greater difficulty in sourcing outside crews to help restore power.

Similar to the committee's reasoning for including non-frontline health care workers in Phase 1B, power plant and transmission system operators are highly skilled professionals of which there are very few, they are extensively trained to operate a single asset, and they are extremely difficult to replace. Their jobs are unique and critical to a functioning electric system. While these employees follow extensive COVID-19 mitigation measures, a spread event even at a single facility may result in a very dramatic impact to the grid. Part of our mitigation strategy calls for vaccinating these employees in 2-3 groups to lessen the risk of vaccine side effects or other potential disruptions. Given that there is a 5-6 week period before full inoculation and continued supply constraints, starting the vaccination process now is an important step to strengthening continuity of the state's electric system.


Lastly, we have evaluated the cooperative workforce and determined that 552 employees (44.5% of our workforce) are essential and should be included within Phase 1B. Based on comments submitted by the Wisconsin Utility Association (2,517 employees) and the Municipal Electric Utilities of Wisconsin (510 employees), the total number of electric and gas utility workers determined to be essential would be 3,579 employees.

For the committee's reference, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's comments submitted to the CDC are also attached. Thank you for the difficult work the subcommittee has done and the opportunity to share our comments. Please reach out to us if we can be helpful in any way.

Sincerely,



Steve Freese, President and CEO  
WI Electric Cooperative Association  
(608) 341-8860  
[steve@weca.coop](mailto:steve@weca.coop)



Brent Ridge, President and CEO  
Dairyland Power Cooperative  
(608)-787-1258  
[Brent.Ridge@DairylandPower.com](mailto:Brent.Ridge@DairylandPower.com)



January 13, 2021

Robert R. Redfield, M.D.  
Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, GA 30329

José R. Romero, M.D., FAAP  
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Director Redfield and Chairman Romero,

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is the agency charged with overseeing the reliability of the nation's bulk power system. Over the course of the last year, workers at electric utilities across the country have engaged in heroic efforts to keep the lights on in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their work ensures the functioning of our nation's critical infrastructure—everything from our telecommunications systems to the hospitals that care for our most vulnerable.

It has come to our attention that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has updated its vaccine allocation guidance to place the energy workforce in Phase 1c. We recognize that developing vaccine guidance is a complex, iterative task that requires the balancing of numerous equities. We write with a narrow request: as the Advisory Committee continues to review and update its recommendations, we urge you to consider that a subset of the energy workforce be included in Phase 1b—specifically, highly trained electrical field workers, power plant operators, transmission and distribution grid operators, and personnel who procure the energy needed to balance the grid on a moment-to-moment basis. Those workers' duties can only be performed on-site, usually in close quarters, where full adherence to social distancing guidelines is impossible. And while these utility employees can be counted as among the most critical among the American workforce, they represent a relatively small population. We understand that the number is likely to be on the order of thousands of workers in each state. As such, we urge you to consider prioritizing these workers as the CDC continues revising its vaccine guidance.

We would welcome the opportunity to engage in further discussion regarding the urgency of protecting this subset of essential energy workers and the importance of their work when it comes to safeguarding America's electric system.



## FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Respectfully,

James P. Danly  
Chairman  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Neil Chatterjee  
Commissioner  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Richard Glick  
Commissioner  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Allison Clements  
Commissioner  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Mark C. Christie  
Commissioner  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

cc: Mark W. Menezes, Deputy Secretary of Energy  
Brandon Wales, Acting Director, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

**From:** [Joel Lemke](#)  
**To:** DHS SDMAC  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee Phase 1B comments from Stevens Point Public Utilities  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 12:58:43 PM  
**Attachments:** SDMAC\_1\_15\_21.pdf

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**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

Vaccine Subcommittee,

Please see the attached correspondence.

Regards,

Joel Lemke  
Director of Public Utilities and Transportation  
City of Stevens Point

Phone: (715) 345-5260  
Direct: (715) 345-5266  
Fax: (715) 345-5369  
[jlemke@stevenspoint.com](mailto:jlemke@stevenspoint.com)  
Web: Stevenspoint.com



**City of Stevens Point  
Department of  
Public Utilities**



**Joel C Lemke  
Director  
Phone: 715-345-5266  
jlemke@stevenspoint.com**

January 15, 2021

Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

We urgently request that the essential workers of Wisconsin's drinking water industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredible task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water industry has been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such a fundamental necessity.

The workers of Stevens Point Public Utilities never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The water industry requires professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up a water system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. This frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. The water supplied by water utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone: hospital workers, police officers and especially the firefighters, who have no means of fighting a fire if the water has been shut off.

The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and no one can wash their hands without it. The Department of Homeland Security has specifically recognized water workers as essential critical infrastructure workers, and EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler specifically included water workers as essential in writing to the Nation's Governors about the spread of the COVID-19. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to "preserve the functioning of society." It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water. It is a testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver water to their homes—until the water is disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider our workers today.

Stevens Point Public Utilities and all of Wisconsin's municipal water utilities are committed to serving our communities. Please consider immediately including the frontline workers of water utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

Joel Lemke  
Director of Public Utilities  
City of Stevens Point Public Utilities

**From:** [Nancy Quirk](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine priority for Water Utility Employees  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 12:57:51 PM  
**Attachments:** image002.png  
GBWU\_Vaccine\_Ltr\_01.15.2021.pdf

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Sent for the public comment period

**Nancy Quirk, P.E., General Manager**

Green Bay Water Utility  
PO Box 1210, Green Bay, WI 54305  
P (920)448-3499, C (920) 660-5501  
[nancy.quirk@greenbaywi.gov](mailto:nancy.quirk@greenbaywi.gov)



**OUR MISSION IS TO PROVIDE A RELIABLE, HIGH QUALITY DRINKING WATER SUPPLY WITH EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE AND VALUE**



## *Green Bay Water Utility*

---

631 S. Adams St. – P.O. Box 1210  
Green Bay, WI 54305-1210

920-448-3480  
FAX 920-448-3486  
[www.gbwater.org](http://www.gbwater.org)

January 15, 2021

Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee

c/o Martha McCamy

[dhssdmac@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:dhssdmac@dhs.wisconsin.gov)

**Public Comment:** Vaccination Distribution – Prioritization of Water Utility Workers in Phase 1B

Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

Last week, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on [three criteria](#), the second of which is to “preserve the functioning of society.” I don’t know about you, but I have never seen a society function without clean drinking water. In fact, no life exists without water.

That’s why, today, I strongly urge that the essential workers employed by municipal water utilities be included and prioritized in Phase 1B of Wisconsin’s vaccine distribution, rather than 1C.

I am a water engineer by trade, and currently serve as General Manager of the Green Bay Water Utility—the state’s third-largest drinking water system. We employ five, full-time water operators who work 24/7 shifts. We have distribution crews that are deployed to water main breaks that have the potential to affect hundreds of families, healthcare facilities and could even come between firefighters’ ability to fight a fire. Our metering experts must go inside homes when this happens to make sure water can be turned on, off, flush pipes and ensure water safety. It’s hard work to keep clean water running for a city, and systems are so specific to the cities they serve, it is impossible to find a contracted worker to fill the spot of an essential worker here who should fall ill. Unlike police and fire, the water industry does not have a set of hard and fast rulebook for an entire state or nation; some utilities use ground water, some use well water, some use lakes, streams or rivers. Each town has a different metering system, pipe materials and levels of corrosiveness in the soil. There is no option to train an additional operator at the last minute due to an outbreak; the staff we have now is all we have—after years of training and certifications.

January 15, 2021

Page 2

The shock of our placement on this list rings throughout the water industry, a traditionally quiet workforce that is always working in the background without much pomp and circumstance. This is a wake-up call for an industry—that bus drivers would be placed ahead of water industry workers on the vaccination priority list. A bus driver has no way to wash their hands without water. A hospital cannot function without water. Waterborne diseases cannot be prevented without daily tests and treatment specific to our source water. This list is infinite; but I hope I've made my point clear: I feel strongly that water workers have not been appropriately prioritized, and I am urging you to correct this immediately.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy Quirk". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Nancy Quirk, P.E.

General Manager

GREEN BAY WATER UTILITY

NQ/tlv

**From:** [Lenz, Bernard](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Snyder, Craig](#); [Anderson, Leland](#); [Asp, Steve](#); [Erickson, Tina](#); [Graff, Mark](#); [Greeno, Jared](#); [Hein, Brian](#); [Lenz, Bernard](#)  
**Subject:** Request of Vaccine Subcommittee to place Utility workers in Phase 1B  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 12:41:41 PM  
**Attachments:** La Crosse Utility Letter.pdf

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Dear Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

I think everyone agrees how critical our hospitals and frontline medical staff are to the fight against COVID and are the priority group to vaccinate. But I would like for you to imagine a hospital without water coming in or sewer flowing out, or with no electricity. I want you to imagine a hospital already overwhelmed by COVID patients being asked to treat a mass of citizens sickened from a water born pathogen event in a municipal drinking water supply or from environmental exposure to raw sewer as a result of a spill or back-up. Imagine a firefighter with no means of fighting a fire because there isn't enough water. Imagine citizens in homes without Sewer, Water, or Electricity even for a couple days. And imagine the impacts any or all of those scenarios would have on society, given the fragile balance we are already experiencing.

Our Nations Sewer and Water Utility Workers do such a good job keeping utilities operational that it is easy to take the services provided by utilities for granted, like they will always be there. But if you stop and think about what it would be like without these services you see why we I am writing to request that the essential workers of Wisconsin's Utility industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We cannot overlook the critical need of utilities every day, and how that need is only amplified amid this pandemic.

Utility workers are highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice; so losing our utility workers to COVID illness is not an option, because a City not having water, sewer, and electricity is not an option. Due to the critical nature of the services we provide, the La Crosse Utility workers have done everything they can to reduce risk of exposure while maintaining the systems throughout the pandemic. But this means our efficiency has suffered and we are losing ground on the maintenance required due to the modified operating protocols implemented. We need to be able to fully engage our staff in all aspects of operating and maintaining our system again, without the risk of mass exposure decimating our crew and risking the ability to provide these vital services.

Utility workers can also be spreaders of COVID. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. Trouble shooters from both our sewer and water crews are entering homes in response to flooded basements, be it flooded by sewer or water. This frequent contact with the public is impossible to avoid. (When you have a basement full of raw sewer you want someone to help!!) Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. You can't get 6 feet of separation inside a 4 ft manhole or small well house.

The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and a City cannot function long without it. The Department of Homeland Security has specifically recognized utility workers as essential critical infrastructure workers, and EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler specifically included utility workers as essential in writing to the Nation's Governors about the spread of the COVID-19. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to "preserve the functioning of society." It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water, sanitary disposal of human waste, and a steady supply of electricity. It is a

testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver these services to their homes—until they are disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider what that disruption and chaos would look like and act accordingly. Please consider immediately including the frontline utility workers in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,  
Bernard Lenz, PE  
City of La Crosse Utility Manager

---

*"Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn."* – Benjamin Franklin

-----  
Bernard N Lenz, P.E. - Utilities Manager  
City of La Crosse  
400 La Crosse Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

General Utilities Office Phone: 608- 789-7536  
Direct Desk Phone: 608-789-7588



## CITY OF LA CROSSE UTILITIES WATER - SEWER - STORM

400 La Crosse St  
La Crosse WI 54601-3396  
Phone (608) 789-7536  
[utilities@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:utilities@cityoflacrosse.org)

**Bernard N Lenz, P.E.**  
Utilities Manager  
[lenzb@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:lenzb@cityoflacrosse.org)

**Tina Erickson**  
Utilities Accounting &  
Customer Support Supervisor  
[ericksont@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:ericksont@cityoflacrosse.org)

01/15/2021

Dear Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

I think everyone agrees how critical our hospitals and frontline medical staff are to the fight against COVID and are the priority group to vaccinate. But I would like for you to imagine a hospital without water coming in or sewer flowing out, or with no electricity. I want you to imagine a hospital already overwhelmed by COVID patients being asked to treat a mass of citizens sick from a water born pathogen event in a municipal drinking water supply or from environmental exposure to raw sewer as a result of a spill or back-up. Imagine a firefighter with no means of fighting a fire because there isn't enough water. Imagine citizens in homes without Sewer, Water, or Electricity even for a couple days. And imagine the impacts any or all of those scenarios would have on society, given the fragile balance we are already experiencing.

Our Nations Sewer and Water Utility Workers do such a good job keeping utilities operational that it is easy to take the services provided by utilities for granted, like they will always be there. But if you stop and think about what it would be like without these services you see why we I am writing to request that the essential workers of Wisconsin's Utility industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We cannot overlook the critical need of utilities every day, and how that need is only amplified amid this pandemic.

Utility workers are highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice; so losing our utility workers to COVID illness is not an option, because a City not having water, sewer, and electricity is not an option. Due to the critical nature of the services we provide, the La Crosse Utility workers have done everything they can to reduce risk of exposure while maintaining the systems throughout the pandemic. But this means our efficiency has suffered and we are losing ground on the maintenance required due to the modified operating protocols implemented. We need to be able to fully engage our staff in all aspects of operating and maintaining our system again, without the risk of mass exposure decimating our crew and risking the ability to provide these vital services.

Utility workers can also be spreaders of COVID. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. Trouble shooters from both our sewer and water crews are entering homes in response to flooded basements, be it flooded by sewer or water. This frequent contact with the public is impossible to avoid. (When you have a basement full of raw sewer you want someone to help!!) Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. You can't get 6 feet of separation inside a 4 ft manhole or small well house.

The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and a City cannot function long without it. The Department of Homeland Security has specifically recognized utility workers as essential critical infrastructure workers, and EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler specifically included utility workers as essential in writing to the Nation's Governors about the spread of the COVID-19. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to "preserve the functioning of society." It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water, sanitary disposal of human waste, and a steady supply of electricity. It is a testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver these services to their homes—until they are disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider what that disruption and chaos would look like and act accordingly. Please consider immediately including the frontline utility workers in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

Bernard Lenz, PE  
City of La Crosse Utility Manager

**From:** [Paul Much](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Distribution for Critical Infrastructure Workers  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 11:54:58 AM

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**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

**January 15, 2021**

**From:** Midwest Contract Operations, Inc. (Provide staff for Municipal Water and Wastewater facilities)

**To:** Ann Lewandowski and State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee (SDMAC) Vaccine Subcommittee

We the workers of the Municipal Water and Wastewater industry have remained on the job since day 1 of the COVID-19 crisis for client communities. For the greater good, we have been putting our personal health at risk every day to maintain **public and environmental health** by supplying **clean water** and **wastewater treatment**. We respectfully ask that as the final version of the Wisconsin COVID-19 Vaccination Plan is developed, that the mission essential workers employed by municipal water and wastewater systems be prioritized in **Phase 1b** of distribution, after that of frontline healthcare workers and the most vulnerable.

We recognize the seriousness of the decisions that must be made when it comes to prioritizing, what we hope will be, a safe and effective vaccination for COVID-19. We understand that there are many priorities and metrics to consider, including complex coordination with federal and local government partners.

The employees of the water and wastewater treatment industry are critical to not only the state's economy but are also critical in supporting the healthcare sector's lifesaving treatments, keeping safe, treated water flowing to all customers (**Manufacturing businesses, hospitals, clinics and other healthcare facilities included**) and has maintained wastewater treatment for sanitation at these facilities also. Hospitals and other healthcare facilities cannot run if there is no safe water available or if the toilets do not flush. **Many rural municipal systems have one or two employees, so if one or both operation specialists contract COVID-19 it means the city will be left without a means of treating water or wastewater.**

As in most situations, it is always assumed that clean, safe water, and treatment of wastewater for maintaining the sanitation of our society is assumed to happen automatically and without interruptions. **It does not happen that way and the operators that do this work place ourselves in situations dealing with the public. To that end we need to protect ourselves and our work for the functioning of society.**



Our state, the Department of Homeland Security, EPA has specifically recognized water and wastewater workers as essential critical infrastructure workers. **We are highly specialized and cannot work from home or in isolation from others on the job site.** We are exposed daily to customers and situations where we cannot isolate or distance ourselves from the work we need to do to maintain public water supplies and water treatment.

To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission among our profession, the water/wastewater industry has changed the way we work by following CDC guidelines in order to best protect our employees from contracting the COVID-19 virus. However, due to the nature of the work, there are times when we need to be in close proximity to each other, making vaccination – and PPE – highly important to the job. Mission essential workers in treatment plants often work in open floor plan environments and the work requires frequent consultation and physical work between employees. Some work activities also require these employees to be in the community conducting field work, often in teams, which increases their potential exposure to the virus. If we are exposed or contract COVID-19 this could very well leave our town without a qualified operator to maintain our water/wastewater system.

It is for these reasons that we respectfully request the SDMAC committee recognize and prioritize these extremely essential workers during **Phase 1b** of the Vaccination Plan. Thank you for your consideration of our input.

*Best Regards*

**Paul Much**

**President**

920-475-0054 | [pmuch@mco-us.com](mailto:pmuch@mco-us.com) | <http://mco-us.com/>



**From:** [Amanda Wegner](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Comments from Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District re: vaccination priority tiers  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 11:32:43 AM  
**Attachments:** image001.png  
image002.png  
image003.png  
image004.png  
Comments-SDMAC-MMSD.pdf

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**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

To the members of the State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee:

On behalf of Michael Mucha, chief engineer and director of Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District, and our staff, please find our comments regarding COVID vaccination tiers attached.

Thank you,  
Amanda Wegner

### **Amanda Wegner**

Communications & Public Affairs Manager

**Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District**

1610 Moorland Road • Madison, WI 53713-3398

P: 608.709.1891

C: 608.590.3133

Email: [amandaw@madsewer.org](mailto:amandaw@madsewer.org) • [madsewer.org](http://madsewer.org)



## Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District

1610 Moorland Road • Madison, WI 53713-3398 • P: (608) 222-1201 • F: (608) 299-2129

To: State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee  
From: Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District  
Re: Comments on Coronavirus Vaccination Tier Recommendations

Thursday, January 14, 2021

To the Members of the State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee:

Each day, the dedicated staff of Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District work to support the processes and infrastructure that allows us to treat 41 million gallons of wastewater daily from more than 380,000 individuals and businesses in the greater Madison area. Whether its sampling wastewater, climbing down manholes to troubleshoot issues in the system, or working on pumps, pipes and the like on the grounds of the Nine Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant, the work our employees do every hour of every day is critical to protecting public health, in a pandemic or otherwise. While we appreciate the committee's work to ensure equitable distribution of the coronavirus vaccine, we were frustrated to learn that our critical work has been deprioritized in regards to vaccine distribution and moved from Tier 1B to 1C.

As critical infrastructure, we believe that wastewater utility employees should be identified as priority frontline workers as we assure human waste is collected and treated, which protects public health and the environment.

Our employees are essential to operate, maintain and monitor our service area's wastewater infrastructure to keep it functioning. We rely on highly trained individuals with deep expertise and intricate knowledge of our systems — including operators, electricians, mechanics and collection system service professionals — who work around the clock and in close proximity to one another. These are essential employees whose positions cannot be readily staffed with temporary help, and their work cannot be done remotely. An outbreak of coronavirus at the plant would gravely impact our operations, and in the worst-case scenario, could result in raw sewage overflows to basements that would compound the public health challenges the community is already facing with coronavirus.

Our mission is to protect public health and the environment. Our employees are vital to protecting public health, and even more so at a time when public health resources are already strained; protecting their health and well-being must be a priority. Please recategorize critical infrastructure employees, such as those employed by Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District and other wastewater treatment facilities, to Tier 1B.

On behalf of all staff at Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District, thank you for your consideration.



D. Michael Mucha  
Chief Engineer & Director

**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee - Phase 1B Request for Water Utility Staff  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 11:27:56 AM

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**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

We urgently request that the essential workers of Wisconsin’s drinking water industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredibly difficult task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water industry has been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such a fundamental necessity.

The workers of Waukesha Water Utility never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The water industry requires professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up a water system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. This frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. Samples need to be taken and repairs made to critical equipment that sometimes makes social distancing impossible to maintain. The water supplied by water utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone: hospital workers, police officers and especially the firefighters, who have no means of fighting a fire if the water has been shut off.

The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and no one can wash their hands without it. The Department of Homeland Security has specifically recognized water workers as essential critical infrastructure workers, and EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler specifically included water workers as essential in writing to the Nation’s Governors about the spread of the COVID-19. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to “preserve the functioning of society.” It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water. It is a testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver water to their homes—until the water is disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider our workers today.

Waukesha Water Utility and all of Wisconsin’s municipal water utilities are committed to serving our communities.

Please consider immediately including the frontline workers of water utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on.

Thank you for considering our input.

Kelly Zylstra, PE  
Operations Manager

Waukesha Water Utility  
PO Box 1648  
Waukesha, WI 53187-1648

Office: [262.409.4430](tel:262.409.4430)

Fax: [262.521.5399](tel:262.521.5399)

**From:** [Matt Saloun](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee\_ Phase 1B Request  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 11:26:08 AM  
**Attachments:** Village of Plover Water\_ Vaccine Distribution.pdf

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## Plover Water System

300 Water Way, Plover, WI 54467  
715-345-5254, 715-345-5248

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January 15, 2021

Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

We urgently request that the essential workers of Wisconsin's drinking water industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredible task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water industry has been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such a fundamental necessity.

The workers of the **Village of Plover** never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The water industry requires professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up a water system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. This frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. The water supplied by water utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone: hospital workers, police officers and especially the firefighters, who have no means of fighting a fire if the water has been shut off.

The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and no one can wash their hands without it. The Department of Homeland Security has specifically recognized water workers as essential critical infrastructure workers, and EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler specifically included water workers as essential in writing to the Nation's Governors about the spread of the COVID-19. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to "preserve the functioning of society." It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water. It is a testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver water to their homes—until the water is disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider our workers today.

The **Village of Plover** and all of Wisconsin's municipal water utilities are committed to serving our communities. Please consider immediately including the frontline workers of water utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

Matthew Saloun  
Water System Manager  
Village of Plover Water Utility

**From:** [Jesse Rankin](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** COVID vaccination prioritization  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 11:24:37 AM

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**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

We urgently request that the essential workers of Wisconsin’s drinking water industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredible task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water industry has been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such a fundamental necessity.

The workers of the Village of Bonduel utilities never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The water industry requires professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up a water system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. This frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. The water supplied by water utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone: hospital workers, police officers and especially the firefighters, who have no means of fighting a fire if the water has been shut off.

The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and no one can wash their hands without it. The Department of Homeland Security has specifically recognized water workers as essential critical infrastructure workers, and EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler specifically included water workers as essential in writing to the Nation’s Governors about the spread of the COVID-19. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to “preserve the functioning of society.” It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water. It is a testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver water to their homes—until the water is disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider our workers today.

The Village of Bonduel utilities and all of Wisconsin’s municipal water utilities are committed to serving our communities. Please consider immediately including the frontline workers of water utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

Jesse Rankin  
Village of Bonduel



Director of Municipal Operations

Phone # 715-758-8779

Fax# 715-758-6582

Email: [publicworks@villageofbonduel.com](mailto:publicworks@villageofbonduel.com)

To: [DHS SDMAC](#)  
Cc: [Chris Ferguson](#)  
Subject: Vaccine Subcommittee Phase 1B Vaccine Prioritization Letter  
Date: Friday, January 15, 2021 11:21:51 AM

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**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

We urgently request that the essential workers of Wisconsin’s drinking water industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredible task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water industry has been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such a fundamental necessity.

The workers of Winneconne Water and Waste Water Utility never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The water industry requires professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up a water system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. This frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. The water supplied by water utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone: hospital workers, police officers and especially the firefighters, who have no means of fighting a fire if the water has been shut off.

The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and no one can wash their hands without it. The Department of Homeland Security has specifically recognized water workers as essential critical infrastructure workers, and EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler specifically included water workers as essential in writing to the Nation’s Governors about the spread of the COVID-19. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to “preserve the functioning of society.” It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water. It is a testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver water to their homes—until the water is disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider our workers today.

Winneconne Water and Waste Water Utility and all of Wisconsin’s municipal water utilities are committed to serving our communities. Please consider immediately including the frontline workers of water utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

Respectfully,

Kirk Ruetten

Director of Public Works  
Village of Winneconne Water and Waste Water  
920-582-4381  
Office- 920-706-0303

**From:** [Eric Lindman](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Katie Rosenberg](#)  
**Subject:** COVID vaccination prioritization - Wausau Waterworks  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 11:17:19 AM

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**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

We urgently request that the essential workers of Wisconsin's drinking water industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredible task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water industry has been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such a fundamental necessity.

The workers of Wausau Waterworks never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The water industry requires professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up a water system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. This frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. The water supplied by water utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone: hospital workers, police officers and especially the firefighters, who have no means of fighting a fire if the water has been shut off.

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Wausau Waterworks and all of Wisconsin's municipal water utilities are committed to serving our communities. Please consider immediately including the frontline workers of water utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

*Eric Lindman, P.E.*

Director of Public Works & Utilities

City of Wausau  
407 Grant St.  
Wausau, WI 54403-4783  
P: 715-261-6745  
C: 715-292-2606

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=====

**From:** [Curt Czarnecki](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Hill, Susan - MUN](#); [Melissa Arnot](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Prioritization  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 11:10:48 AM

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**Caution: Message from external sender. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

We urgently request that the essential workers of Wisconsin's drinking water industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredible task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water industry has been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such a fundamental necessity.

The workers of the Kenosha Water Utility never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The water industry requires professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up a water system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. This frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. The water supplied by water utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone: hospital workers, police officers and especially the firefighters, who have no means of fighting a fire if the water has been shut off.

The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and no one can wash their hands without it. The Department of Homeland Security has specifically recognized water workers as essential critical infrastructure workers, and EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler specifically included water workers as essential in writing to the Nation's Governors about the spread of the COVID-19. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to "preserve the functioning of society." It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water. It is a testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver water to their homes—until the water is disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider our workers [today](#).

The Kenosha Water Utility and all of Wisconsin's municipal water utilities are committed to serving our communities. Please consider immediately including the frontline workers of water utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

Curt Czarnecki, P.E.  
General Manager  
Kenosha Water Utility  
4401 Green Bay Road - Kenosha, WI 53144  
Phone: (262)653-4306  
Fax: (262)653-4303  
[www.kenosha.org](http://www.kenosha.org)  
[cczarnecki@kenosha.org](mailto:cczarnecki@kenosha.org)

**From:** [Sharon Eveland](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment regarding Phase1b of COVID vaccine rollout  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 11:02:19 AM

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To whom it may concern:

I am supportive of the existing groups as listed on the current draft plan but I am asking that additional consideration for certain essential local government employees be given. Specifically, our local government utility staff who are responsible for operating the utility systems (so excluding non-field staff) and our Public Works staff that are responsible for snow removal are critical to ensuring these systems are operated in a safe manner. In a community like Clintonville we are too small to have back up personnel. We have been lucky so far but it would be incredibly detrimental to lose the entire crew that is responsible for making sure the Wastewater Treatment Plant continues to operate goes down because one employee become sick or be unable to restore power because our electric utility staff are out or be unable to remove snow because everyone capable of driving a massive plow truck is out. We have implemented numerous preventative measures to help mitigate the risk to these staff but we have no back up if we lose them. These are technical positions that we can't just hire someone temporarily for and neither can we have these systems down. We would be forced to make employees who have been exposed or are diagnosed by asymptomatic work anyway and I am sure every one of you would agree that is a terrible idea.

Thank you,  
Sharon Eveland  
City Administrator  
City of Clintonville  
50 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Clintonville, WI 54929

(715)823-7600



**From:** [Brand, Stephan](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Vaccine Subcommittee Phase 1B  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 11:01:54 AM  
**Attachments:** image001.png  
MEGWater - COVID vaccination prioritization SB 01152021 signed.pdf

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Good morning State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee (SDMAC):

Attached please find a letter supporting the inclusion of Water Utility and Wastewater Utility Workers in Phase 1B of the COVID Vaccination Prioritization.

Stephan M. Brand  
Public Works Utility Operations Manager  
City of Oshkosh  
920.232.5365  
Follow us: [Web](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)





January 15, 2021

**Subject: Water Utility and Wastewater Utility Advocating for Inclusion of Utility Workers in Phase 1B of COVID Vaccination Prioritization**

**To Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:**

We urgently request that the essential workers of Wisconsin’s drinking water and wastewater industries be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredible task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water and wastewater industries have been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such fundamental necessities.

The workers of the City of Oshkosh Water Utility and City of Oshkosh Wastewater Utility never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The water and wastewater industries require professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up a water and wastewater system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. This frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. The water supplied by water utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone: hospital workers, police officers and especially the firefighters, who have no means of fighting a fire if the water has been shut off.

The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and no one can wash their hands without it. The Department of Homeland Security has specifically recognized water workers as essential critical infrastructure workers, and EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler specifically included water workers as essential in writing to the Nation’s Governors about the spread of the COVID-19. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to “preserve the functioning of society.” It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water. It is a testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver water to their homes—until the water is disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider our workers today.

The City of Oshkosh Water Utility and City of Oshkosh Wastewater Utility and all of Wisconsin's municipal water utilities are committed to serving our communities. Please consider immediately including the frontline workers of water utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,



Stephan M. Brand  
Public Works Utility Manager

SMB/jb

**From:** [Jim Stawicki](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Phase 1B Vaccine Subcommittee Comments – Sturgeon Bay Utilities  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 10:57:42 AM  
**Attachments:** COVID-19 Vaccination Request.pdf

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230 E. Vine Street  
P.O. Box 27  
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235

Phone: 920.746.2820  
Fax: 920.746.2822  
sbunet.com

Shared strength through  WPPI Energy

January 15, 2021

Dear Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Subcommittee,

I appreciate the complexity of the decisions surrounding COVID-19 vaccine prioritization and recognize the efforts of the Subcommittee to ensure an equitable distribution. I submit these comments to advocate for adding municipal utility employees to Phase 1b of the vaccine distribution rollout.

Sturgeon Bay Utilities provides critical electric, water and wastewater services to our community. As essential frontline utility workers, we are highly specialized, provide necessary services and must be available to work 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

We are not able to work from home and have gone to extreme lengths to keep employees safe and ensure continuity of the critical services we provide the community. However, our daily exposure to customers and the nature of our duties - which often requires that we work in teams - makes vaccination highly important to maintain the utility system.

Exposure to the virus by our essential workers could be catastrophic, as it has the potential to disrupt community services such as electricity, water, and wastewater. This could affect spaces such as homes, schools, daycare facilities, manufacturing companies, restaurants, grocery stores, medical clinics and government facilities. I would like to highlight the fact that this list potentially includes facilities that distribute the vaccine and keep it at the low temperature necessary for safe storage.

We respectfully request that municipal electric, water, and wastewater workers be eligible to receive the vaccine in Phase 1b.

Your consideration of this urgent request is appreciated. Thank you for the time and effort you are spending to ensure Wisconsin is well prepared to vaccinate efficiently and effectively.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Stawicki".

James M. Stawicki  
General Manager

**From:** [Gary Skroch - City of Arcadia Water & Wastewater Dept.](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Letter  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 10:57:39 AM

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Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

We urgently request that the essential workers of Wisconsin's drinking water industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredible task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water industry has been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such a fundamental necessity.

The workers of Arcadia Water & Wastewater Utilities never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The water industry requires professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up a water system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. This frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. The water supplied by water utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone: hospital workers, police officers and especially the firefighters, who have no means of fighting a fire if the water has been shut off.

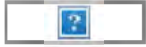
The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and no one can wash their hands without it. The Department of Homeland Security has specifically recognized water workers as essential critical infrastructure workers, and EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler specifically included water workers as essential in writing to the Nation's Governors about the spread of the COVID-19. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to "preserve the functioning of society." It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water. It is a testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver water to their homes—until the water is disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider our workers today.

Arcadia Water & Wastewater Utilities and all of Wisconsin's municipal water utilities are committed to serving our communities. Please consider immediately including the frontline workers of water utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

Gary Skroch  
Superintendent  
Arcadia Water & Wastewater Utility

401 Sobotta St  
Arcadia, WI 54612  
608-323-3452  
rkdwater@triwest.net



This email has been checked for viruses by Avast antivirus software.  
[www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)

**From:** [Dean Bergstrom](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Cardona, Mary - MEUW](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee and Phase 1B  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 10:42:58 AM

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Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

The line crews and other employees working in Wisconsin's electric utilities have kept the lights on across our state throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency. That includes the employees of Cumberland Municipal Utility, one of Wisconsin's 81 municipally-owned utilities.

We respectfully ask that, as the final recommendations for COVID-19 Vaccine Priority Group 1B are developed, the mission-essential frontline electric utility workers be prioritized along with other first responders, such as firefighters and police officers. (Currently, utility workers, although not explicitly mentioned, appear to be included among "essential workers" in later priority group phases).

The pandemic has directly impacted the way our utility performs critical work. From the outset, we have taken steps to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our employees. For example, many of our electric utility employees are using staggered shifts or smaller teams of mission-essential workers. However, due to the nature of the work and essential training, there are times when these employees need to be in close proximity to each other, making vaccination highly important to the job. Some work activities also require electric employees to be in the community conducting field work, which also increases their potential exposure to the virus.

Utility workers are critical to not only the state's economy but also in supporting the healthcare sector's life-saving treatments, keeping people connected as they continue to socially distance and work from home, and more. Mission-essential workers are a subset of our workforce and are responsible for the fundamental processes and facilities that keep the lights on and energy flowing. These employees are highly specialized and do not have the option to work from home or in isolation from others on the job site.

Cumberland Municipal Utility and all of Wisconsin's municipal electric utilities are committed to serving our communities. We respectfully ask that our employees be given priority for the vaccine in order to continue delivering the critical services our customers rely on. Thank you for considering our input and for your work in planning for a smooth and effective rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Sincerely,

Dean Bergstrom  
General Manager  
Cumberland Municipal Utility



**From:** [Chris Shaw](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Chris Stempa](#); [Vandehey, Paula](#); [Nathan Loper](#); [Eggebrecht, Kurt](#); [Cassidy A. Walsh](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee" and "Phase 1B"  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 10:42:23 AM

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Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

We urgently request that the essential workers of Wisconsin's drinking water industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredible task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water industry has been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such a fundamental necessity.

The workers of Appleton Water Utility never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The water industry requires professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up a water system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. This frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. The water supplied by water utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone: hospital workers, police officers and especially the firefighters, who have no means of fighting a fire if the water has been shut off.

The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and no one can wash their hands without it. The Department of Homeland Security has specifically recognized water workers as essential critical infrastructure workers, and EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler specifically included water workers as essential in writing to the Nation's Governors about the spread of the COVID-19. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to "preserve the functioning of society." It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water. It is a testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver water to their homes—until the water is disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider our workers today.

Appleton Water Utility and all of Wisconsin's municipal water utilities are committed to serving our communities. Please consider immediately including the frontline workers of water utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

Chris W. Shaw

Appleton Utilities Director  
2006 East Newberry Street  
Appleton, WI 54915

Ph: 920-832-2362

Cell: 920-419-6084

[chris.shaw@appleton.org](mailto:chris.shaw@appleton.org)

**From:** [Teresa Nachreiner](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** vaccine subcommittee  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 10:37:16 AM

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Dear Committee Members:

My husband works for the City of Madison Building Inspection Dept. He and his 10 co-workers have the responsibility to enforce the City's Building Codes for permits issued to Home Owners and Contractors for ongoing business. To do their jobs correctly they need to go inside these homes and buildings while families and contractors are there still working inside. He has noticed when he pulls up or walks onsite people are scrambling to put on or locate their masks.

So what we do know, or don't know, is how long the virus hangs in the air. Although my husband went online early in this pandemic and purchased his own N95 masks because his department didn't qualify for them.

I am also writing to you concerned for my health also; he could be a carrier.

Can and shouldn't his department be considered for your next Phase of vaccine.

Thank you,

Concerned Wife

**From:** [Tim Hayden](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee Phase 1B request  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 10:34:04 AM

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Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

We urgently request that the essential workers of Wisconsin’s drinking water industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredible task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water industry has been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such a fundamental necessity.

The workers of the Fort Atkinson Water Utility never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The water industry requires professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up a water system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. This frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. The water supplied by water utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone: hospital workers, police officers and especially the firefighters, who have no means of fighting a fire if the water has been shut off.

The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and no one can wash their hands without it. The Department of Homeland Security has specifically recognized water workers as essential critical infrastructure workers, and EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler specifically included water workers as essential in writing to the Nation’s Governors about the spread of the COVID-19. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to “preserve the functioning of society.” It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water. It is a testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver water to their homes—until the water is disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider our workers today.

Fort Atkinson and all of Wisconsin’s municipal water utilities are committed to serving our communities. Please consider immediately including the frontline workers of water utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

Timothy Hayden  
Fort Atkinson Water Utility Supervisor

**From:** [Stelmasek, Suzanne L:\(BSC\)](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** FERC Letter to CDC on COVID Vaccinations  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 10:22:51 AM  
**Attachments:** FERC\_Letter\_to\_CDC\_\_\_FINAL\_\_\_ALL\_Signatures.pdf

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Good morning,

In light of the Department of Health Service's guidelines on COVID-19 vaccination eligibility, I wanted to make sure that you had seen this letter that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission sent to the CDC emphasizing the critical importance of the electric industry workforce receiving vaccinations on a priority basis. Exelon has a number of essential employees who manage electric infrastructure that live in Wisconsin and we would like to ensure that they are able to continue doing this very important work.

I was unsure of the best contact to make aware of this information, so I apologize for sending this to the general inquiry email. Please let me know who may be the best individual to communicate further on this with.

Thank you,

**Suzanne Stelmasek**  
Manager, State Government Affairs



4300 Winfield Rd  
Warrenville, IL 60555  
Office: 630.657.3791 | Mobile: 847.846.3507  
[Suzanne.Stelmasek@exeloncorp.com](mailto:Suzanne.Stelmasek@exeloncorp.com)

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January 13, 2021

Robert R. Redfield, M.D.  
Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, GA 30329

José R. Romero, M.D., FAAP  
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Director Redfield and Chairman Romero,

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is the agency charged with overseeing the reliability of the nation's bulk power system. Over the course of the last year, workers at electric utilities across the country have engaged in heroic efforts to keep the lights on in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their work ensures the functioning of our nation's critical infrastructure—everything from our telecommunications systems to the hospitals that care for our most vulnerable.

It has come to our attention that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has updated its vaccine allocation guidance to place the energy workforce in Phase 1c. We recognize that developing vaccine guidance is a complex, iterative task that requires the balancing of numerous equities. We write with a narrow request: as the Advisory Committee continues to review and update its recommendations, we urge you to consider that a subset of the energy workforce be included in Phase 1b—specifically, highly trained electrical field workers, power plant operators, transmission and distribution grid operators, and personnel who procure the energy needed to balance the grid on a moment-to-moment basis. Those workers' duties can only be performed on-site, usually in close quarters, where full adherence to social distancing guidelines is impossible. And while these utility employees can be counted as among the most critical among the American workforce, they represent a relatively small population. We understand that the number is likely to be on the order of thousands of workers in each state. As such, we urge you to consider prioritizing these workers as the CDC continues revising its vaccine guidance.

We would welcome the opportunity to engage in further discussion regarding the urgency of protecting this subset of essential energy workers and the importance of their work when it comes to safeguarding America's electric system.



## FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Respectfully,

Handwritten signature of James P. Danly in cursive.

James P. Danly  
Chairman  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Handwritten signature of Neil Chatterjee in cursive.

Neil Chatterjee  
Commissioner  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Handwritten signature of Richard Glick in cursive.

Richard Glick  
Commissioner  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Handwritten signature of Allison Clements in cursive.

Allison Clements  
Commissioner  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Handwritten signature of Mark C. Christie in cursive.

Mark C. Christie  
Commissioner  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

cc: Mark W. Menezes, Deputy Secretary of Energy  
Brandon Wales, Acting Director, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

**From:** [Melanie Krause](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Sen.Roth - LEGIS](#); [Rep.Snodgrass@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Rep.Snodgrass@legis.wisconsin.gov)  
**Subject:** Phase 1B Vaccine Subcommittee Comments – Menasha  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 9:51:14 AM

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Dear Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Subcommittee,

I appreciate the complexity of the decisions surrounding COVID-19 vaccine prioritization and recognize the efforts of the Subcommittee to ensure an equitable distribution. I submit these comments to advocate for adding municipal utility employees to Phase 1b of the vaccine distribution rollout.

Menasha Utilities provides critical electric and water services to our community. As essential frontline utility workers, we are highly specialized, provide necessary services and must be available to work 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

We are not able to work from home and have gone to extreme lengths to keep employees safe and ensure continuity of the critical services we provide the community. However, our daily exposure to customers and the nature of our duties - which often requires that we work in teams - makes vaccination highly important to maintain the utility system.

Exposure to the virus by our essential workers could be catastrophic, as it has the potential to disrupt community services such as electricity, water, and wastewater. This could affect spaces such as homes, schools, daycare facilities, manufacturing companies, restaurants, grocery stores, medical clinics and government facilities. I would like to highlight the fact that this list potentially includes facilities that distribute the vaccine and keep it at the low temperature necessary for safe storage.

We respectfully request that municipal electric, water, and wastewater workers be eligible to receive the vaccine in Phase 1b.

Your consideration of this urgent request is appreciated. Thank you for the time and effort you are spending to ensure Wisconsin is well prepared to vaccinate efficiently and effectively.

Sincerely,

*Melanie Krause*

General Manager  
Menasha Utilities  
PO Box 340  
Menasha, WI 54952-0340  
Phone: (920) 967-3412  
Email address is : [mkrause@menashautilities.com](mailto:mkrause@menashautilities.com)

\*\*\*\*\*As a local governmental entity, the City of Menasha is subject to Wisconsin statutes relating



to open records. Any e-mail received by anyone at the City of Menasha, as well as any e-mail sent by someone from the City of Menasha are subject to these laws. Unless otherwise exempted from the Open Records law, senders and receivers of City e-mail should presume that any e-mail is subject to release upon request.\*\*\*\*\*

**From:** [Andy Vickman](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee (Phase 1B)  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 9:46:39 AM

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Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

We urgently request that the essential workers of Wisconsin’s drinking water industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredible task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water industry has been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such a fundamental necessity.

The workers of the Wrightstown Water Utility never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The water industry requires professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up a water system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. This frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. The water supplied by water utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone: hospital workers, police officers and especially the firefighters, who have no means of fighting a fire if the water has been shut off.

The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and no one can wash their hands without it. The Department of Homeland Security has specifically recognized water workers as essential critical infrastructure workers, and EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler specifically included water workers as essential in writing to the Nation’s Governors about the spread of the COVID-19. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to “preserve the functioning of society.” It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water. It is a testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver water to their homes—until the water is disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider our workers today.

The Wrightstown Water Utility and all of Wisconsin’s municipal water utilities are committed to serving our communities. Please consider immediately including the frontline workers of water utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

**Andy Vickman**  
**Superintendent of Public Works and Utilities**  
SNEWPS Secretary/ Treasurer



Office: 920-532-0434

Fax: 920-532-0433

Cell: 920-362-2468

[avickman@wrightstown.us](mailto:avickman@wrightstown.us)

*It's Just Right!*

**From:** [Botts, David](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee, Phase 1B  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 9:38:27 AM

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Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

We urgently request that the essential workers of Wisconsin's drinking water industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredible task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water industry has been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such a fundamental necessity.

The Utility workers of [City of Janesville](#) never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The water industry requires professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up a water system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. This frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. The water supplied by water utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone: hospital workers, police officers and especially the firefighters, who have no means of fighting a fire if the water has been shut off.

The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and no one can wash their hands without it. The Department of Homeland Security has specifically recognized water workers as essential critical infrastructure workers, and EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler specifically included water workers as essential in writing to the Nation's Governors about the spread of the COVID-19. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to "preserve the functioning of society." It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water. It is a testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver water to their homes—until the water is disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider our workers today.

[City of Janesville](#) and all of Wisconsin's municipal water utilities are committed to serving our communities. Please consider immediately including the frontline workers of water utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

[David Botts, PE](#)  
[Utility Director](#)  
[City of Janesville](#)  
[Water and Wastewater Utilities](#)

**From:** [admin@villageofbristol.org](mailto:admin@villageofbristol.org)  
**To:** [DHSSDMAC@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:DHSSDMAC@dhs.wisconsin.gov)  
**Subject:** FW: drinking water industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 9:35:28 AM  
**Attachments:** image001.png

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Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

We urgently request that the essential workers of Wisconsin’s drinking water industry be re-prioritized from Phase 1C to 1B for vaccine distribution. We recognize the incredible task you have had to take on in deciding which industries are most in need of the vaccine; however, we believe the critical work of the water industry has been overlooked amid this pandemic. It would be nothing short of disastrous to risk the health of people who supply such a fundamental necessity.

The workers of Village of Bristol never stopped working, despite the pandemic. The water industry requires professionals to be experts in their own systems, due to the many variables that make up a water system, and are therefore highly specialized and impossible to replace without substantial notice. Metering experts specific to each municipal water system have to go into homes and businesses every time water is turned on or off so that we can flush their system and ensure the water is going to be safe. This frequent contact with the public is dangerous, but impossible to avoid. Additionally, despite efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among our workers, the nature of our work requires our workers to be in close proximity to each other. The water supplied by water utilities is vital to public health for virtually everyone: hospital workers, police officers and especially the firefighters, who have no means of fighting a fire if the water has been shut off.

The foundation of public health is clean water. All living things depend on it to survive and no one can wash their hands without it. The Department of Homeland Security has specifically recognized water workers as essential critical infrastructure workers, and EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler specifically included water workers as essential in writing to the Nation’s Governors about the spread of the COVID-19. Recently, the CDC published a recommendation to vaccinate based on three criteria, the second of which is to “preserve the functioning of society.” It is hard to imagine anything more important to a functioning society than clean water. It is a testament to our workers and industry that people rarely think about what it takes to deliver water to their homes—until the water is disrupted. However, we respectfully request that you consider our workers today.

Village of Bristol and all of Wisconsin’s municipal water utilities are committed to serving our communities. Please consider immediately including the frontline workers of water utilities in Phase 1B in order for them to continue delivering the critical services our customers and society rely on. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

Randy Kerkman  
Administrator  
Village of Bristol



**Randall R Kerkman**  
Village of Bristol  
Administrator/Public W...

(262) 857-2368  
admin@villageofbristol.org  
19801 83rd St  
Bristol WI 53104

**From:** [Village of Footville](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee - Phase 1B  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 9:27:57 AM  
**Attachments:** image003.png

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After reading the recommendations from your committee regarding vaccine priority groups I have become increasingly disheartened. I am a Village Clerk-Treasurer for a small community located in southern Wisconsin, we have a small staff with only 2 employees in our Department of Public Works/Water and Sewer Utility and 2 of us in the office, myself and a Deputy Clerk-Treasurer.

It is our responsibility to keep this Village running safely and smoothly, everything is under our purview, just to name a few:

Water and Sewer Utility for all Village residents

Road crew

Managing basic services – garbage & recycle pick up, police protection (We are in the process of switching to new providers for both so this is labor intensive at the moment)

WI State report filing deadlines (they do not make ANY exceptions)

Managing accounts receivable and payable

Each one of us has specific duties, tasks, and responsibilities that other employees would be incapable of completing should we fall ill. Honestly, we all have been working 40+ hours a week to keep things going through this pandemic, I don't know what we would do if one of us was out sick for several weeks.

We have 2 upcoming elections on February 16<sup>th</sup> and April 6<sup>th</sup> and I have not heard anyone talk about Wisconsin Clerks and/or their election staff being prioritized for the COVID vaccine. Quite frankly I find this disgraceful. Every election cycle I, along with my staff, come into close contact with hundreds of my residents during our in person absentee voting and on election day.

We are not the only small community in Wisconsin that are in this predicament, there are hundreds of other communities out there just like us.

Regards,

*Shawna March*  
*Clerk-Treasurer*  
*Village of Footville*  
*Population: 810*

P.O. Box 445

Footville, WI 53537

608-876-6116

[village@footvillewis.net](mailto:village@footvillewis.net)

[www.footvillewis.net](http://www.footvillewis.net)





**From:** [Kevin Freber](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Joe Pickart](#); [Matthew Trebatoski](#)  
**Subject:** State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee (SDMAC) Vaccine Subcommittee  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 9:16:29 AM  
**Attachments:** image001.png  
Vaccine Subcommittee letter.pdf

---

Ms. Martha McCamy,  
Please see the attached letter regarding the 1b group for Covid 19 vaccinations.  
Sincerely,  
Kevin

Kevin L Freber  
City of Oconomowoc WWTF  
Operations Manager / Safety Director  
900 S Worthington Street  
Oconomowoc, WI 53066  
Phone: (262) 569-2192  
Fax: (262) 569-3273  
kfreber@oconomowoc-wi.gov





January 15, 2021

**From:** Kevin L Freber and Joe Pickart

**Subject:** Vaccination Distribution

**To:** Ann Lewandowski and State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee (SDMAC) Vaccine Subcommittee

We the workers of the Municipal Water, Wastewater and Electric industry have remained on the job since day 1 of the COVID-19 crisis for City of Oconomowoc. For the greater good, we have been putting our personal health at risk every day to maintain **public and environmental health** by supplying **clean water, wastewater treatment and reliable electricity**. We respectfully ask that as the final version of the Wisconsin COVID-19 Vaccination Plan is developed, that the mission essential workers employed by municipal water and wastewater systems be prioritized in **Phase 1b** of distribution, after that of frontline healthcare workers and the most vulnerable.

We recognize the seriousness of the decisions that must be made when it comes to prioritizing, what we hope will be, a safe and effective vaccination for COVID-19. We understand that there are many priorities and metrics to consider, including complex coordination with federal and local government partners.

The employees of the Municipal Water, Wastewater and Electric industry are critical to not only the state's economy but are also critical in supporting the healthcare sector's lifesaving treatments, keeping safe, treated water flowing and reliable electricity to all customers (**Manufacturing businesses, hospitals, clinics and other healthcare facilities included**) and has maintained wastewater treatment for sanitation at these facilities also. Hospitals and other healthcare facilities cannot run if there is no reliable electricity, safe water available or if the toilets do not flush. **Many rural municipal systems have one or two employees, so if one or both operation specialists or linemen contract COVID-19 it means the City will be left without a means of treating water, wastewater or supply reliable power.**

As in most situations, it is always assumed that the electric power will be on and clean, safe water, and treatment of wastewater for maintaining the sanitation of our society is assumed to happen automatically and without interruptions. **It does not happen that way and the**

**operators and linemen that do this work place ourselves in situations dealing with the public. To that end we need to protect ourselves and our work for the functioning of society.**

Our state, the Department of Homeland Security, EPA has specifically recognized water, wastewater workers and electrical linemen as essential critical infrastructure workers. **We are highly specialized and cannot work from home or in isolation from others on the job site.** We are exposed daily to customers and situations where we cannot isolate or distance ourselves from the work, we need to do to maintain public water supplies, water treatment and provide reliable electricity.

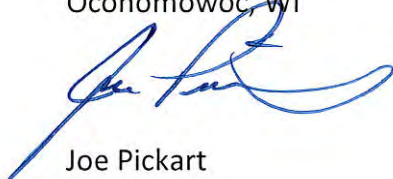
To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission among our professions, the water/wastewater industry, the municipal electric utilities of Wisconsin and public has changed the way we work by using staggered shifts, alternating days of work, using smaller teams of workers. However, due to the nature of the work, there are times when we need to be in close proximity to each other, making vaccination – and PPE – highly important to the job. Mission essential workers in treatment plants and electric utilities often work in open floor plan environments and the work requires frequent consultation and physical work between employees. Some work activities also require these employees to be in the community conducting field work, often in teams, which increases their potential exposure to the virus. If we are exposed or contract COVID-19 this could very well leave our City without a qualified operator or lineman to maintain our water/wastewater system and electrical grid system.

It is for these reasons that we respectfully request the SDMAC committee recognize and prioritize these extremely essential workers during **Phase 1b** of the Vaccination Plan. Thank you for your consideration of our input.

Sincerely,



Kevin L Freber  
Operation Manager  
Oconomowoc, WI



Joe Pickart  
Utility Manager  
Oconomowoc, WI

CC: Governor Tony Evers

**From:** [Jesse Singerhouse](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee phase 1B public comment  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 8:46:06 AM

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Dear Members of the Wisconsin State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee -Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee,

I am writing today to offer my public comments on your proposed 1B vaccination plan as the CEO of Dunn Energy Cooperative in Menomonie, Wisconsin. First let me commend you for your dedication to protect the citizens of Wisconsin. COVID has had a tremendous impact on so many aspects of each of our lives. I am excited that we are making progress with the vaccine distribution. I can only imagine what a difficult task you have before you and I'm sure you are receiving many requests to move certain groups ahead of others.

My comments center on prioritizing utility and energy workers in a vaccine distribution. As the CEO of a small rural electric cooperative, I manage a staff of 25 dedicated people who help bring power to nearly 11,000 rural homes, farms and businesses near Dunn County. We are not the largest Cooperative or utility but we are part of thousands of workers across the State who provide such a critical resource to every Wisconsin business, school, manufacturing plant, farm and home. Those homes, business, schools and farms rely on electricity, propane, fuel oil and natural gas to keep them warm, run their machines, create economic activity and power their daily lives. I feel that behind medical and emergency services utility workers are one of the next most critical groups.

We have taken many precautions to protect our staff, our crews all drive separate trucks to job sites and power outages, everyone wears masks unless it is a safety hazard when working around electricity, some office staff work from home, we have closed our doors to the public. So we are doing our level best on a day to day basis to keep our employees safe and keep the lights on for our members. Still we have had 2 cases of COVID in our staff, luckily through the mitigation efforts I listed previously, it did not spread to any other staff and no one else was identified as a close contact. Both cases resulted from contact outside of work in the home.

My fear as a CEO of a small company is that I get a "spreader" event in my line crew and my ability to respond to power outages is compromised. We do have plans with neighboring Cooperatives to call on them for assistance if we need it. So we are making every plan we can to always have a way to keep the lights on. Having a number of our employees receive the vaccine sooner rather than later would help us be better prepared for that task.

I ask you to take a second look at including critical utility workers in this next round. In our case with 25 employees about 16 are involved in the direct business of restoring power, planning operations, etc. All our staff are critical, but the line crew is especially critical.

Workers in generating plants and the transmission of electricity are also critical.

I respectfully ask that you include utility workers in the groups of critical workers up next, while we are not public facing necessarily, individuals, businesses, schools, shelters, jails, etc are highly dependent on our services. One way to perhaps approach this would be to allow each energy utility/cooperative to identify up to a certain percentage of their staff as highly critical to receive the vaccine if making all employees of utilities eligible made the group too big.

I thank you for your time and wish you and all of Wisconsin the best as we continue to fight COVID-19.

Thank you for your time.



**Jesse Singerhouse**  
**General Manager/CEO**  
Dunn Energy Cooperative  
PO Box 220  
Menomonie, WI 54751  
✉ e-mail: [housej@dunnenergy.com](mailto:housej@dunnenergy.com)  
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[www.avg.com](http://www.avg.com)

**From:** [Chris Liveris](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccination Order  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 8:34:04 AM  
**Attachments:** Vaccination Letter.docx

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Dear Ms. McCamy:

Please see and consider the attached letter for a request to reconsider the order of those who get vaccinated.

Respectfully,

Chris Liveris

Utility Manager  
City of Ripon  
560 Aspen Street  
Ripon, Wisconsin 54971  
920-748-4912 - Office  
920-748-2882 - Fax



**January 15, 2021**

**From:** Chris Liveris, Utility Manager, City of Ripon

**Subject:** Vaccination Distribution

**To:** Ann Lewandowski and State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee (SDMAC) Vaccine Subcommittee

We the workers of the Municipal Water and Wastewater industry have remained on the job since day 1 of the COVID-19 crisis for the City of Ripon. For the greater good, we have been putting our personal health at risk every day to maintain **public and environmental health** by supplying clean water and **wastewater treatment**. We respectfully ask that as the final version of the Wisconsin COVID-19 Vaccination Plan is developed, that the mission essential workers employed by municipal water and wastewater systems be prioritized in **Phase 1b** of distribution, after that of frontline healthcare workers and the most vulnerable.

We recognize the seriousness of the decisions that must be made when it comes to prioritizing, what we hope will be, a safe and effective vaccination for COVID-19. We understand that there are many priorities and metrics to consider, including complex coordination with federal and local government partners.

The employees of the water and wastewater treatment industry are critical to not only the state's economy but are also critical in supporting the healthcare sector's lifesaving treatments, keeping safe, treated water flowing to all customers (**Manufacturing businesses, hospitals, clinics and other healthcare facilities included**) and has maintained wastewater treatment for sanitation at these facilities also. Hospitals and other healthcare facilities cannot run if there is no safe water available or if the toilets do not flush. **Many rural municipal systems have one or two employees, so if one or both operation specialists contract COVID-19 it means the city will be left without a means of treating water or wastewater.**

As in most situations, it is always assumed that clean, safe water, and treatment of wastewater for maintaining the sanitation of our society is assumed to happen automatically and without interruptions. **It does not happen that way and the operators that do this work place ourselves in situations dealing with the public. To that end we need to protect ourselves and our work for the functioning of society.**

Our state, the Department of Homeland Security, EPA has specifically recognized water and wastewater workers as essential critical infrastructure workers. **We are highly specialized and cannot work from home or in isolation from others on the job site.** We are exposed daily to customers and situations where we cannot isolate or distance ourselves from the work we need to do to maintain public water supplies and water treatment.

To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission among our profession, the water/wastewater industry has changed the way we work by alternating days of work, however, due to the nature