

Rivers Coordinating Council Meeting

Locations

Illinois State Office Building

555 W Monroe Street, Champaign Room, 10th Floor

Chicago, IL 60661

Illinois State Capitol

Office of the Lieutenant Governor Stratton

401 South 2nd Street, Room 214

Springfield, IL 62706

Minutes July 10, 2025

1. Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

2. Roll Call Members Present:

3. A present majority of filled voting-member positions shall constitute a quorum: i.e. 10 members present				
Position	Name	Present	Phone	Absent
Ex-Officio (voting members)				
Chair (Lt. Governor)	Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton	X		
Dept. of Agriculture	Brian Rennecker	X		
Dept. of Commerce & Economic Opportunity	Monica Bristow	X		
Environmental Protection Agency	Christine Davis	X		
Dept. of Natural Resources	Director Natalie Finnie	X		
Dept. of Transportation	William J Murray (BJ Murray)	X		
Illinois Water Survey	Dr. Jenna Shelton		X	
Historic Preservation Division of the Dept. of Natural Resources	Carey Mayer	X		
Army Corps of Engineers	Col. Aaron Willams			X
National Great River Research and Education Center	Dr. John Sloan		X	
Head of the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts	Eliot Clay	X		
Community & Nonprofit Rep. (voting members)				
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Allen LaPointe			X
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Lindsay Keeney	X		

Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Kimberly Neely Du Buclet		X	
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Bradford Zimmerman			X
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Andrea Leege		X	
Community & Nonprofit Mem.				
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Rachel Schick Siegel	X		
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Libby Reuter		X	
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Matthew Stafford		X	

4. Approval of Minutes from June 11, 2025

a. 1st- Rachel Siegel

b. 2nd BJ Murray

A present majority of filled voting-member positions shall constitute a quorum: i.e. 10 members present				
Position	Name	Yay	Nay	Absent
Ex-Officio (voting members)				
Chair (Lt. Governor)	Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton	X		
Dept. of Agriculture	Brian Rennecker	X		
Dept. of Commerce & Economic Opportunity	Monica Bristow	X		
Environmental Protection Agency	Christine Davis	X		
Dept. of Natural Resources	Director Natalie Finnie	X		
Dept. of Transportation	William J Murray (BJ Murray)	X		
Illinois Water Survey	Dr. Jenna Shelton	X		
Historic Preservation Division of the Dept. of Natural Resources	Carey Mayer	X		
Army Corps of Engineers	Col. Aaron Willams			X
National Great River Research and Education Center	Dr. John Sloan	X		
Head of the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts	Eliot Clay	X		
Community & Nonprofit Rep. (voting members)				
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Allen LaPointe			X
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Lindsay Keeney	X		
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Kimberly Neely Du Buclet	X		
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Bradford Zimmerman			X
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Andrea Leege	X		
Community & Nonprofit Mem.				
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Rachel Schick Siegel	X		
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Libby Reuter	X		
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Matthew Stafford	X		

5. Lt. Governor Stratton Remarks

Opening

The Lt. Governor welcomed everyone to the third quarterly meeting of the Rivers of Illinois Coordinating Council for 2025.

New Business

The Lt. Governor thanked the Rock Island Arsenal for hosting the last Council meeting. She then thanked everyone who made that meeting such a success: Col. Williams, Nicole Castelein and the members of the Armed Forces and civilian staff who participated.

Next, she welcomed new council members Andrea Leege and Dr. Jenna Shelton, and recognized the office's new Dunn Fellow, Mahi Patel. She will be supporting all the Councils over the next year.

She then welcomed Jon Altenberg, President and CEO of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence City Initiative. They are working with a binational coalition of municipal and regional U.S. and Canadian elected officials to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin.

Presentation

Jon Altenberg, President and CEO of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence City Initiative presented.

Questions

The Lt. Governor asked about equitable access, and their vision. The Initiative said it looks like reversing the legacy of how waterways are used from manufacturing and transit, to give water back to citizens, industry has a role but multi-use areas where people want to spend time is great for communities and local economies. To work with communities to create a shared vision. They announced a plan in September for funding and the plan moving forward but were still working on details of the programs, and how we will develop proposals.

Subcommittee Updates

Allen LaPointe and Brian Rennecker of the Conservation and Environment committee

They are developing a webinar series focused on how changes at the federal agencies may impact Illinois waterways and environment, with the expectation that for 2025 there will be at least three.

Christine Davis and Monica Bristow of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee

They are planning to work with three communities located on or near bodies of water that Route 66 runs through to hopefully help draw tourists to the town. Next year is the Route 66 Centennial Celebration and the 250th Birthday of America, and they want to use these opportunities to help promote these communities. These locations have been decided on, but the subcommittee needs to reach out to their leaders

Member Updates

Rachel Siegel- Discussed the Damen silos in Chicago and how they were going to be torn down, with approval July 3. The main issue was that they had no water protection/ water quality plan in place. Urban Rivers agreed to do volunteer monitoring, but this wouldn't help aquatic ecosystems. The biggest fear was that dust and heavy metals would seep into the river water.

Carey Mayer- Stated this year is IDNR's 100th anniversary and they would have new things at the Illinois Fair to celebrate. Last year they finished the Illinois beach restoration and now people are showing up proving it was worth it.

Brian Rennecker- Shared his appreciation for the government continuing the Cover Crop Protection Program funding, and over some grants.

Eliot Clay- Wanted to circle back on the February discussion on workforce reduction, and what they are seeing from National Resource Conservation sources.

Chris Davis- Stated in addition to other programs, the Clean Water Act is dependent on the feds for is survey and design, which is too expensive when using private businesses.

John Sloan- Said Federal cuts to The Clean Water Act have caused uncertainty on grant funding for science and research, but nothing had affected their current programs, and the state had stepped in for support.

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

Finally, the Lt. Governor stated the next Council meeting would take place on October 7, at 10 AM, and would be in both Springfield office and Chicago office simultaneously. Then the Lt. Governor took a vote for the meeting to end.

a. 1st Eliot Clay

b. 2nd Monica Bristow

Meeting was adjourned at 11:16 am

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Dept. of Commerce & Economic Opportunity	Monica Bristow	X		
Environmental Protection Agency	Christine Davis	X		X
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Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Bradford Zimmerman			X
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Andrea Leege	X		
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Dr. Nicole Saulsberry			
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Rachel Schick Siegel	X		
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Libby Reuter	X		X
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Matthew Stafford	X		