# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(Updated 4/17/2024)

# Why is this study being conducted?

Since 2017 the Indiana Finance Authority (“IFA”) has been conducting regional water studies around the state in areas that are in need of additional information and clarity regarding their water resources. Data gathered from such studies can help improve coordination between utilities, plan for infrastructure needs, and ensure sustainable future water planning. This will be IFA’s fourth study, with an anticipated completion date of Fall/Winter 2024.

# What does a water study explore?

The IFA’s water studies generally look at current and future water demand and availability. The water-demand analysis primarily focuses on water use in the following sectors: public supply, industrial, irrigation/ agricultural, energy, and residential self-supplied use. Particular attention is given to forecasting future water demand in the public water utility sector using projections of population and economic variables, as well as considering drivers of peak water demand such as climate.

The approach taken for water availability forecasting uses a water-budget framework that incorporates surface water (like rivers and lakes) and groundwater (aquifers and recharge), and accounts for future estimates of human and ecosystem needs. The analysis is both geographically spread-out (spatially distributed) and considered across various timeframes (temporally analyzed), recognizing the importance of seasonal variability on Indiana’s water cycle.

The IFA has previously conducted three other similar water studies. The full reports are technical in nature, but all have easy-to-understand executive summaries. The Central Indiana Water Study webpage below also includes links to short videos that help explain water use and the process of analyzing water demand and availability.

* Central Indiana:   
  <https://www.in.gov/ifa/regional-water-studies/central-indiana-water-study>
* Southeast Central Indiana:   
  <https://www.in.gov/ifa/regional-water-studies/southeast-I74-water-study>
* Southeast Indiana:   
  <https://www.in.gov/ifa/regional-water-studies/southeastern-indiana-water-supply-studies>

# Who is generally involved in a water study?

Federal, state and university partners are usually involved, including the U.S. Geological Survey, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. Local utilities are also consulted and play an important role in providing the grass roots data necessary to properly evaluate water supply and demand. As with prior water studies, the North Central Indiana and Wabash Headwaters Water Studies will also include state universities, such as Indiana University and Purdue University.

# How is the study funded?

The IFA has supported past water studies primarily with federal funding.

**Will the study primarily measure water use and availability in urban areas with a city water utility? How will rural properties on private wells be accounted for in a study like this?**

The primary focus of the study will be all utilities, not just those in urban areas. In addition, commercial/industrial and farming operations that qualify as having large water withdrawals (100,000-gal day) will also be taken into consideration. In rural areas, residential self-supplied water use is a significant proportion of water withdrawals and is accounted for alongside the other water-use sectors. Because individual households do not meter their water use, the amount of residential water consumption is estimated. The estimates use counts of households (outside of utility service areas), generalized Census estimates of people per household, along with published values of water use (gallons per person per day, which can vary by season) from measurements made in similar settings.

**Who is serving on the North Central and Wabash Headwaters Water Studies Advisory Board?**

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| NAME | ORGANIZATION | TITLE |
| Alex Powers | Indiana Department of Environmental Management | Drinking Water Branch, Capacity Development Section, Chief |
| Christian Walker | Indiana Department of Environmental Management | Drinking Water Branch, Groundwater Section, Chief |
| Ryan Mueller | Indiana Department of Natural Resources | Deputy Director, Regulatory Team |
| James McGoff | Indiana Finance Authority | Director of Environmental Programs |
| Sally Letsinger | Indiana University | Senior Research Scientist, Geography |
| Anne Hazlett | Purdue University | Senior Director for Government Relations and Public Affairs |
| Jill Hoffmann | The White River Alliance | Executive Director |
| David Lampe | US Geological Survey | Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Water Science Center, Associate Director (Acting) |
| Jeff Frey | US Geological Survey | Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Water Science Center, Director |

# What is the timeline to conduct and complete this survey?

The survey team was determined in the Spring of 2024 and work began in March 2024 with the goal to have preliminary results by Summer/Fall 2024. Final results, with a written report, are anticipated in the Fall/Winter of 2024.