



# Walla Walla Basin Advisory Committee

Wednesday, April 27

1:00 – 4:00 pm

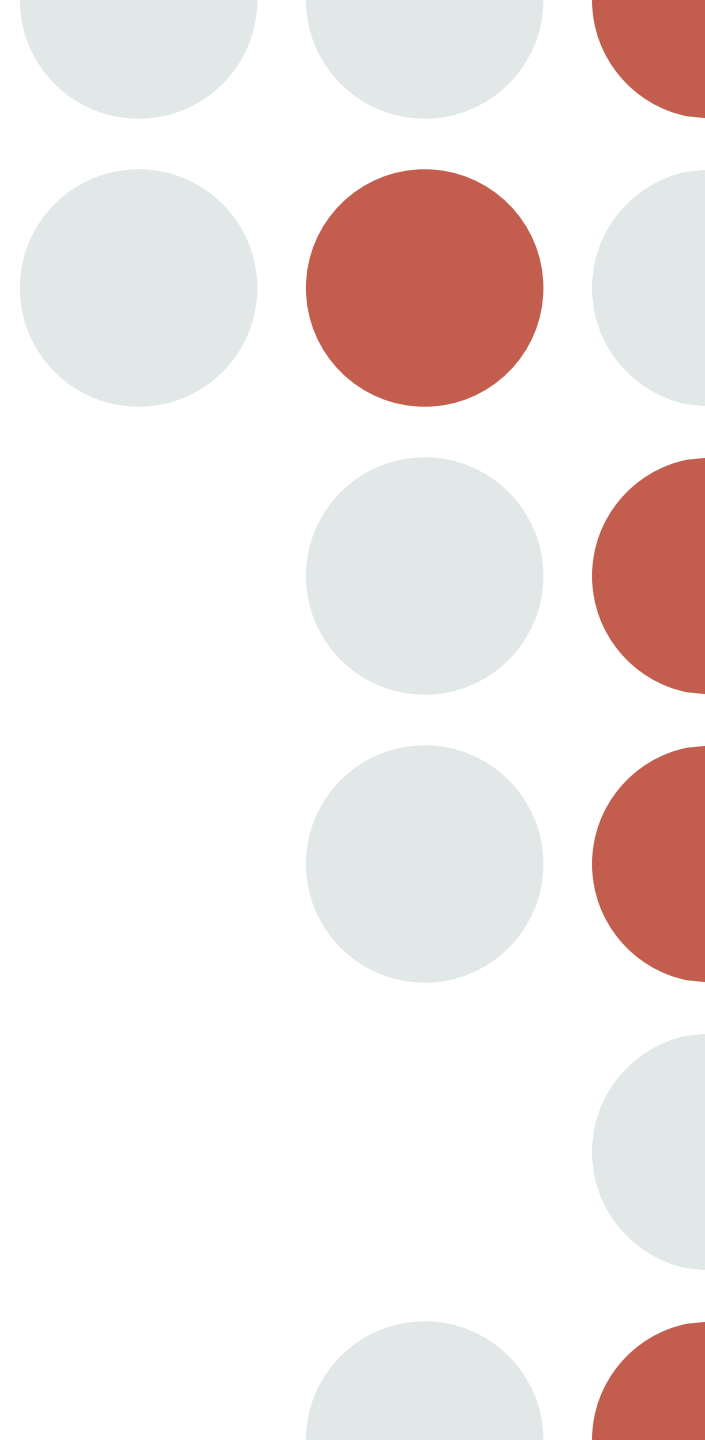
# Introductions



## Welcome and Opening Remarks

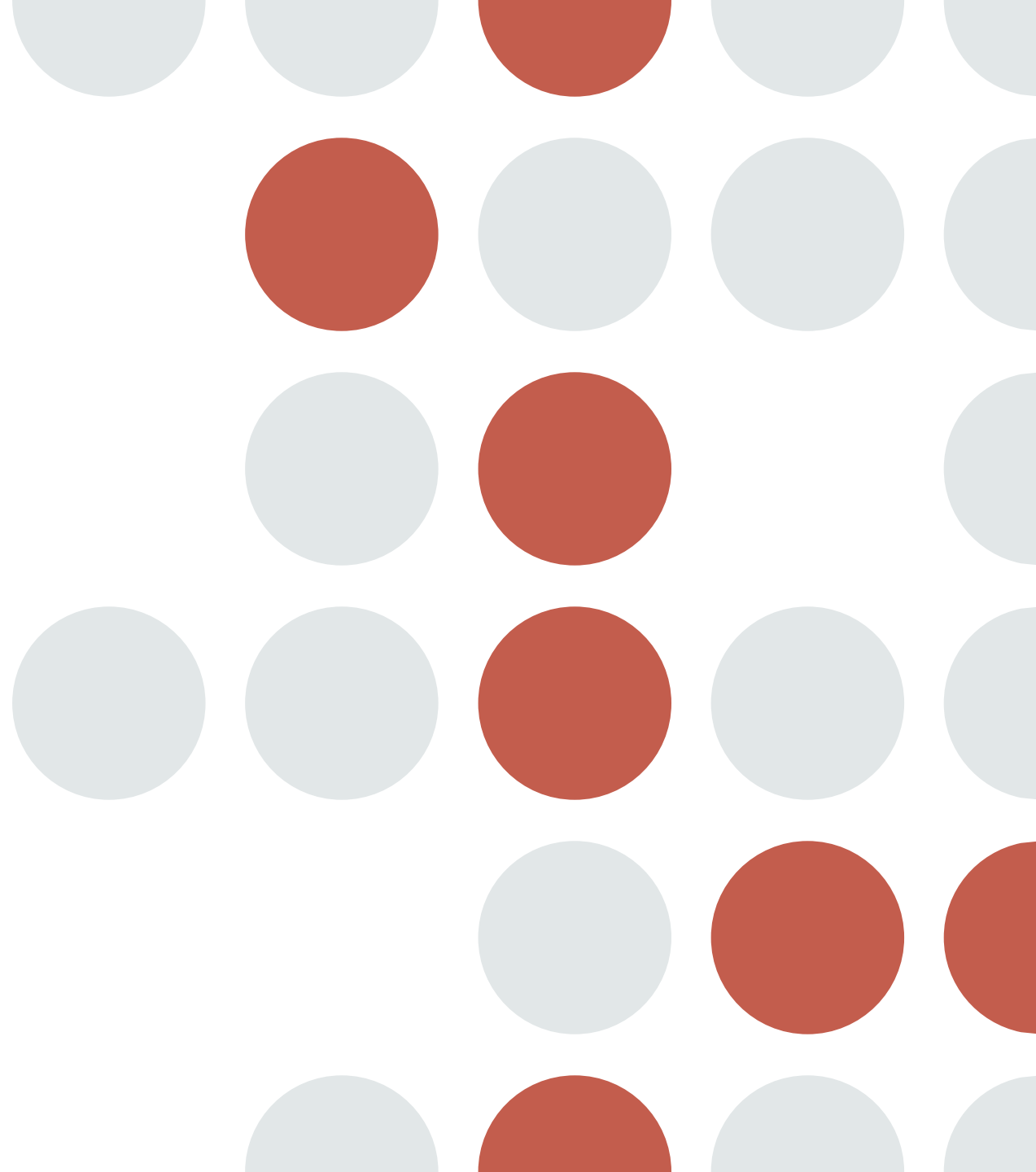
# Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
  - Drought Implications in the Basin
  - Update on OR Funding Opportunities
  - Updates, Agenda Requests
  - Public Comment
  - Wrap up & Next Steps
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# **Drought Implications in the Basin**

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# Overview: Implications of Drought in OR and WA

- Reminder: last meeting heard presentations from OR and WA on snowpack and drought conditions.
- The intention of today's discussion is to better understand water management in Oregon and Washington and to discuss what would be helpful for water users and managers during drought.

**See chat for the link to a Google Doc for written responses.**

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# Ecology's Water Resources Program in the Walla Walla Basin

Jaime Short & Eric Hartwig  
April 27, 2022



# Managing Water During Drought

As noted during March's Walla Walla 2050 meeting, Ecology did not receive any additional funding for drought this last legislative session. Using what we have, we need to retool our approach so we can meaningfully engage on a more broad set of priorities with existing resources.

## What will this look like?

- Consistent complaint management: Call our regional office to register concerns using the Environmental Report Tracking System (ERTS). This allows for coordination between the programs and prompt response on general matters.
- Balancing management between users and compliance work: Historic emphasis in the Walla Walla Basin on management between water right holders has affected our ability to monitor water use and pursue compliance activities. This year, our goal is to strike a more even balance. Real-time management could be an option using stream patrollers under RCW 90.08.
- Plan early: Knowing that we may experience low streamflows, plan accordingly. Work with Eric on seasonal changes to put senior water on higher value or more temperature-sensitive crops. Decisions can be made within a matter of weeks during a drought.
- Multiple adjudications make things complex: Each adjudication is slightly different so management within and between systems might look weird. Call if you have questions.

### Eastern Regional Office

Counties: Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, and Whitman

Online: [Statewide reporting form](#)  
Email: [eroertscoordinator@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:eroertscoordinator@ecy.wa.gov)  
Phone: 509-329-3400



# Managing water for senior users

Water rights in Washington are managed based on prior appropriation. When water supplies run low, users with older rights are satisfied before users with more junior rights. Here's what that looks like:

1. A senior water right holder contacts Eric Hartwig to let them know their rights are not being satisfied. Eric works with them to identify how much water they need and ideally, for how long.
2. Eric contacts the most junior users by phone or in person to let them know they need to shut off or decrease their diversion. He curtails juniors until there is enough water instream to satisfy the senior user.
3. Eric stays in close contact with the senior water right holder. If they don't need water for a period of time, he will call the junior users to let them know they can turn back on. Generally, it will only be for a specific period of time until the senior user plans to ramp their diversion back up.

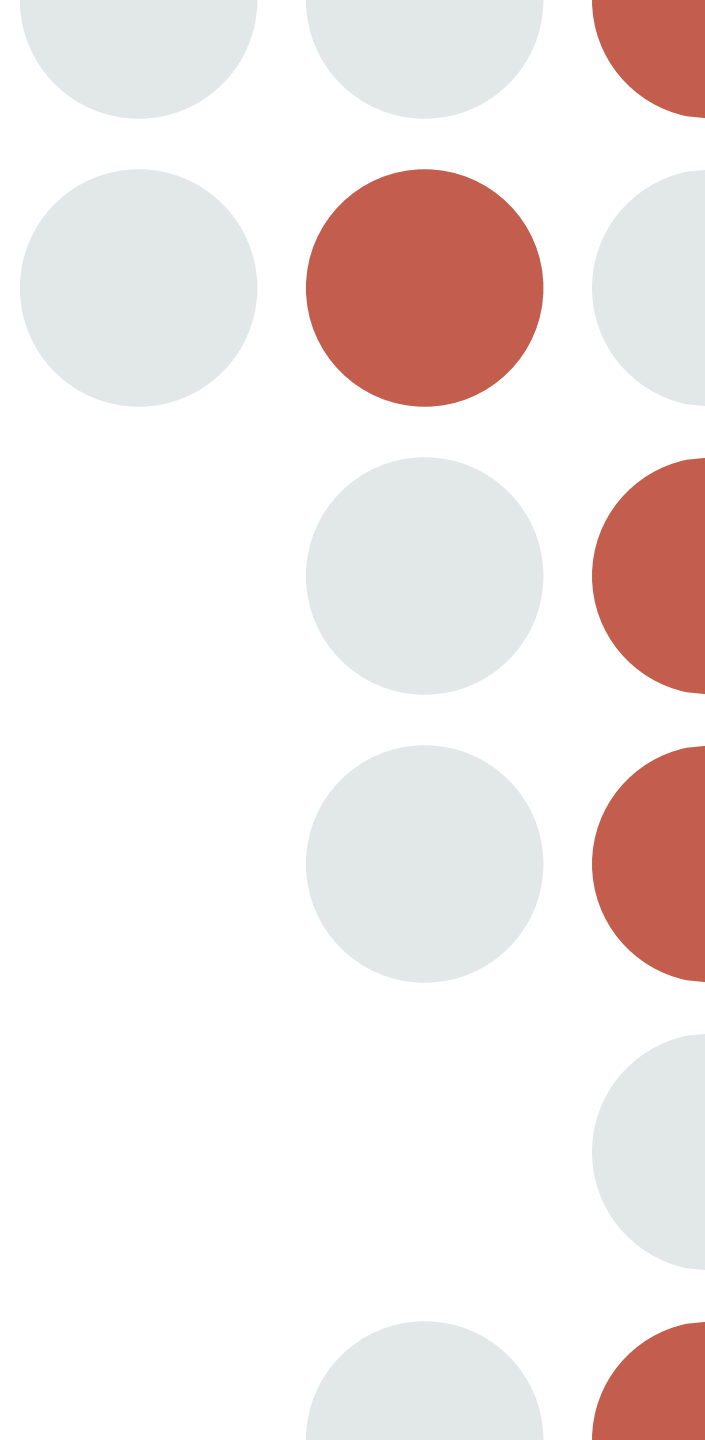
While seasonal snowpack was low, cooler temperatures, recent storms and intermittent rain have helped extend water supplies. The Lower Snake-Walla Walla basin is sitting at 96% of average for this time of year (NRCS, 4/26/22). Depending on the temperature and precipitation we see this spring/early summer, curtailments may not occur until August or September.





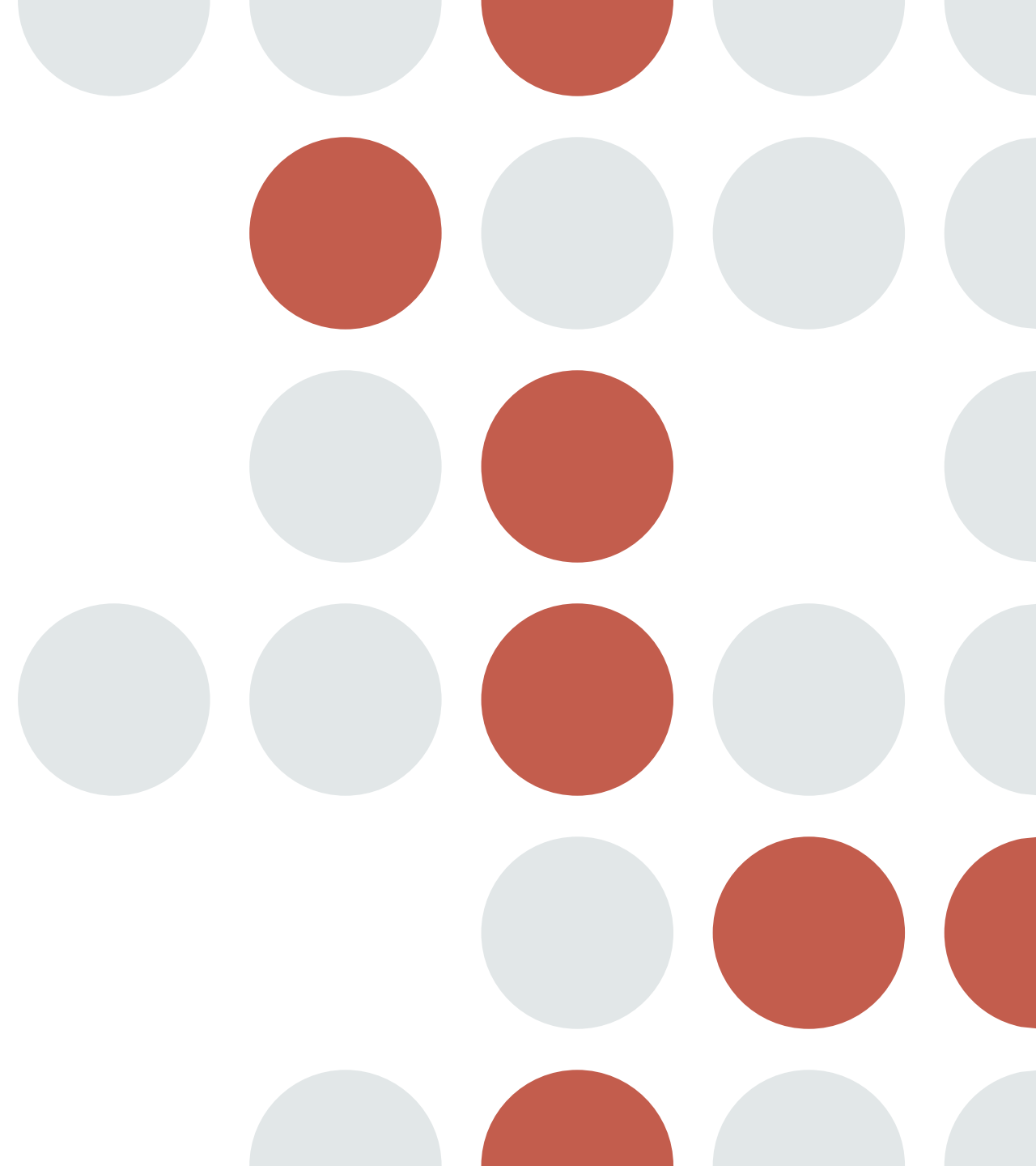
# BAC Discussion:

- What would be helpful for streams, water users and/or water managers during droughts?
  - Are there any tools or actions that have worked well in the past?
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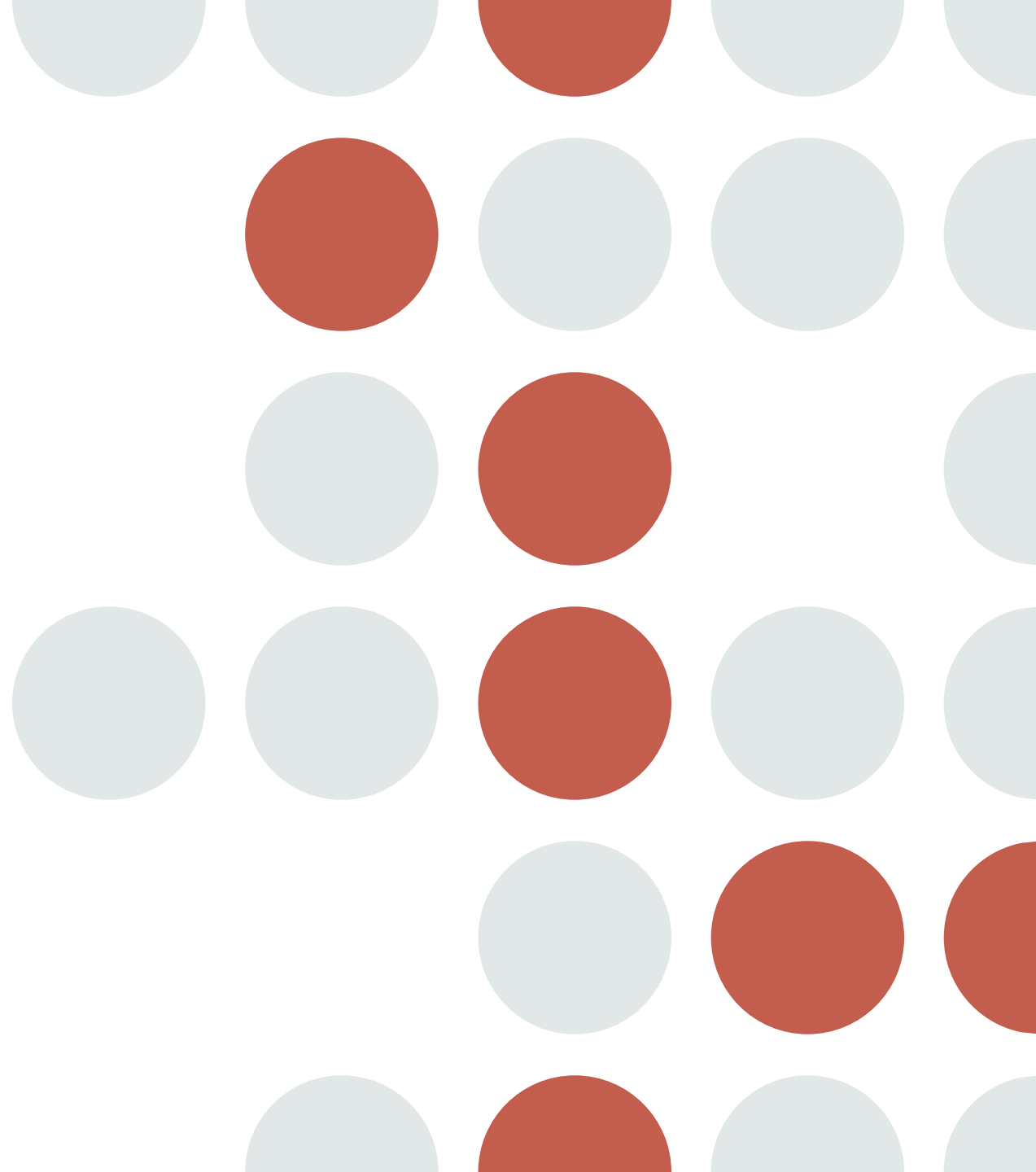
# Update on OR Funding Opportunities

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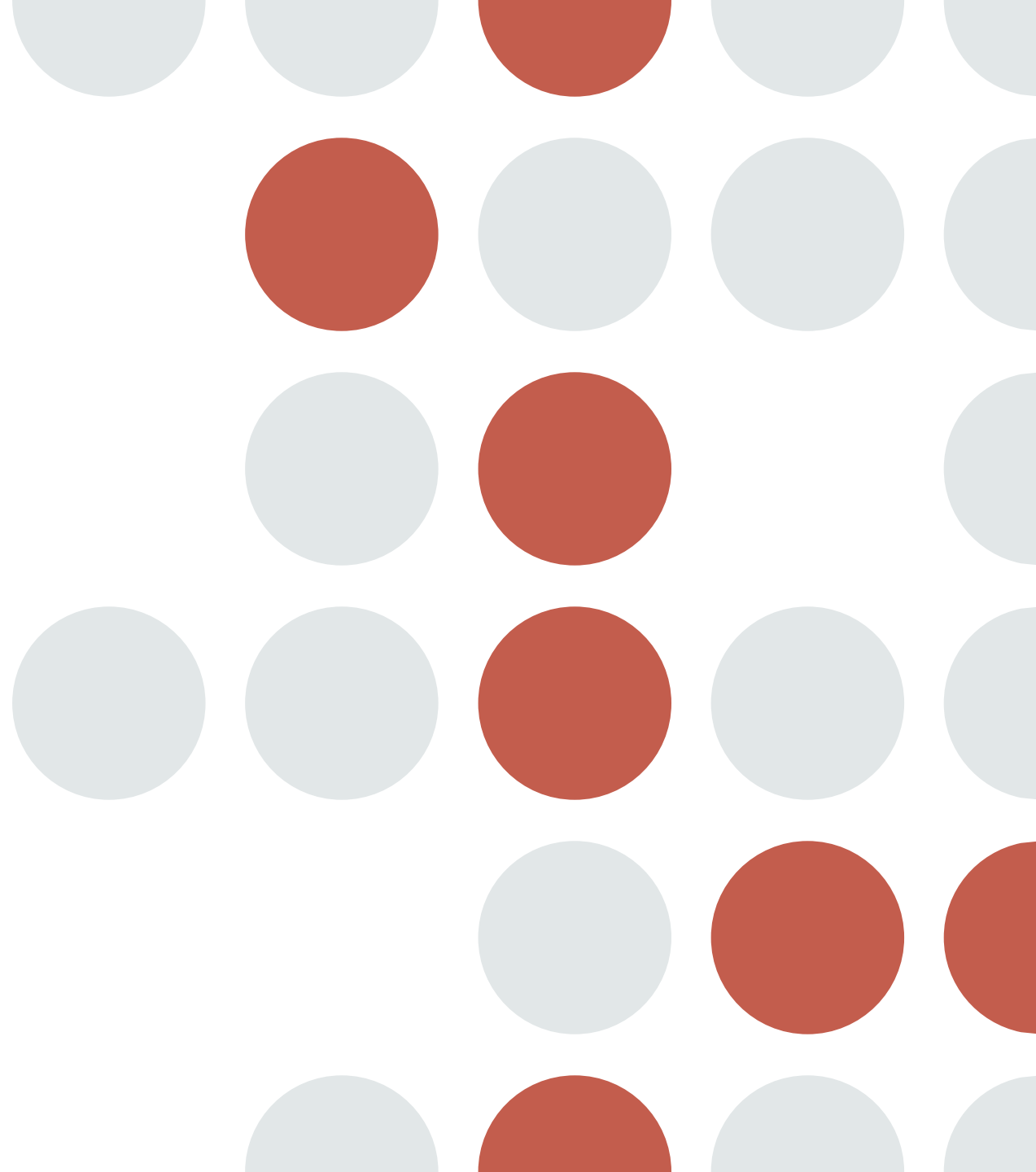
**10 minute break!**

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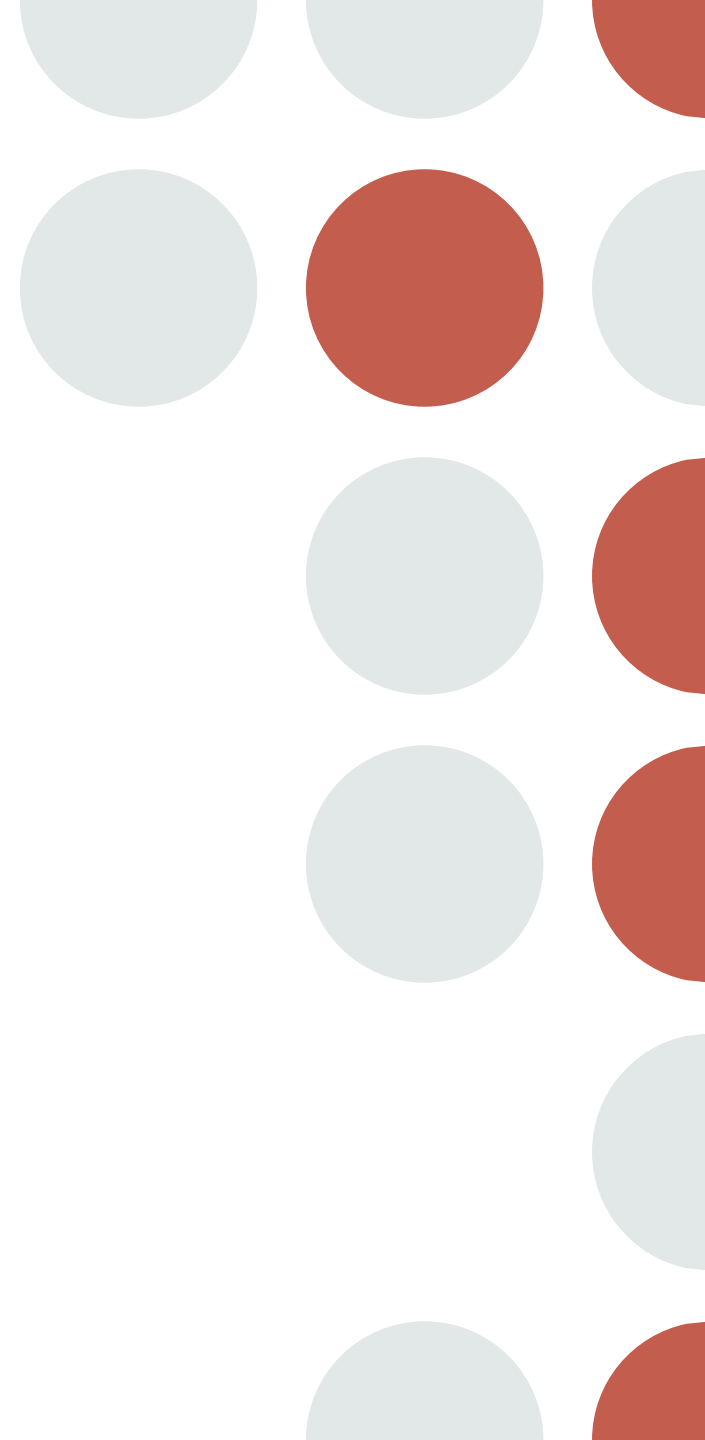
# Updates & Agenda Requests

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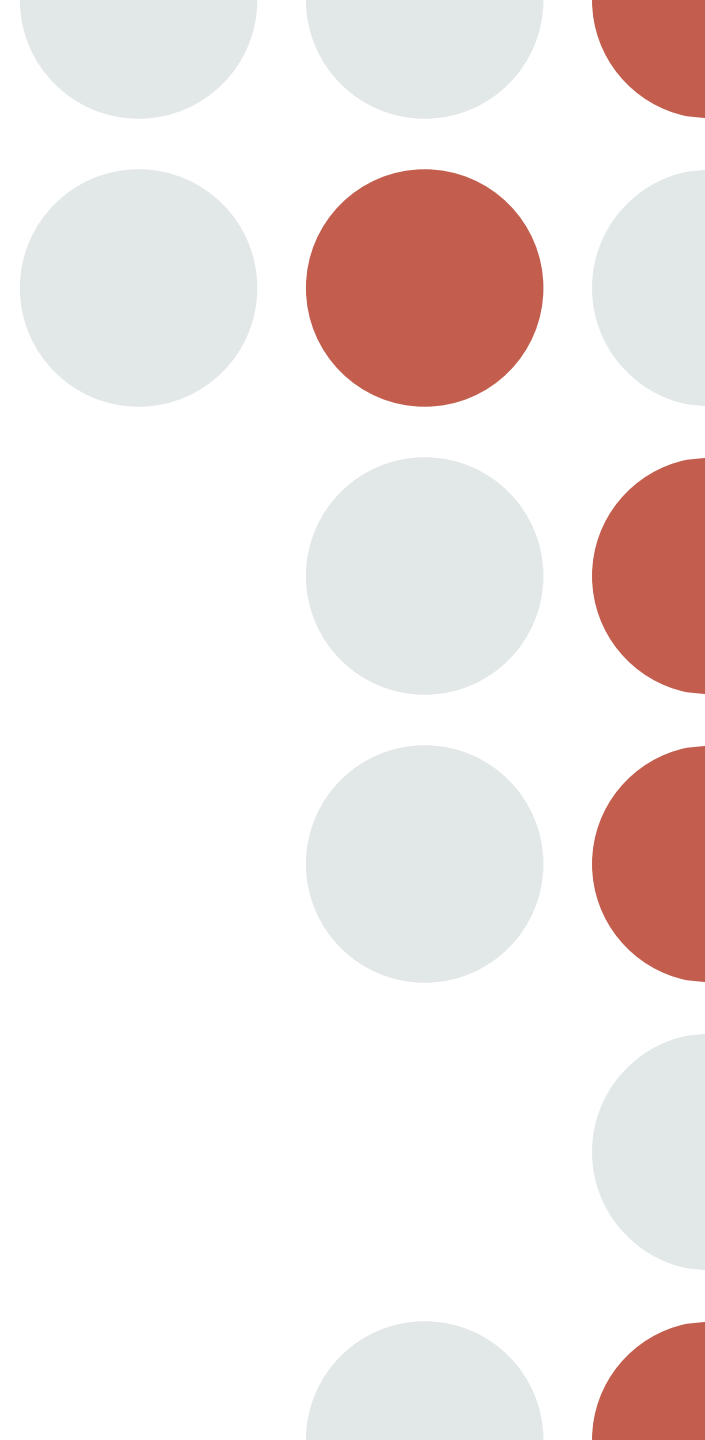
# Updates

- Project and funding updates from BAC members
  - Upcoming WG meetings
    - Implementation
    - Policy, Funding, and Outreach (PFO) 4/28
  - Upcoming BAC meetings 5/25 and 6/22
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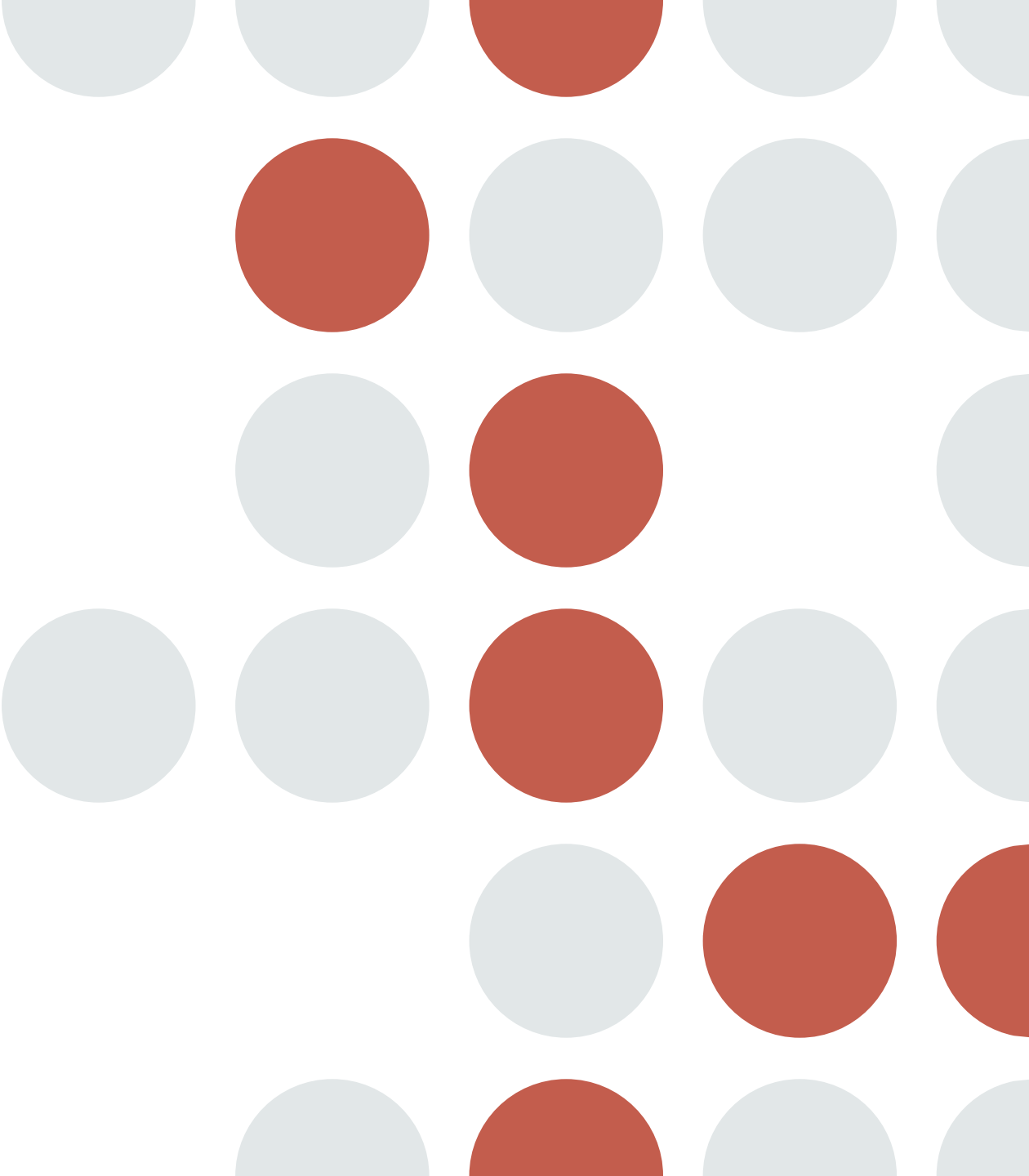


# Future BAC Meetings

- Upcoming agenda requests from BAC members?



# Public Comment



# Wrap Up

- Action Items & Next Steps
    - Reminder: PFO WG Meeting tomorrow at 9 am.
    - Next BAC meeting: May 25 at 1 pm.
  - Closing Comments
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