

**SAN LUIS & DELTA-MENDOTA WATER AUTHORITY  
REGULAR WATER RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING AND JOINT  
REGULAR WATER RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING - SPECIAL  
BOARD WORKSHOP MINUTES**

**March 2, 2020**

The Regular Water Resources Committee and Joint Regular Water Resources Committee Meeting and Special Board Workshop of the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority convened at approximately 10:10 a.m. at 842 6th Street in Los Banos, California with Committee Chair Tom Birmingham presiding.

**Water Resources Committee Members Present**

**Ex-Officio**

Cannon Michael

**Division 1**

Absent

**Division 2**

Absent

**Division 3**

Chris White, Member

**Division 4**

Gath Hall, Member

**Division 5**

Tom Birmingham, Member - Steve Stadler, Alternate

**Board of Directors Present**

**Division 1**

Anthea Hansen, Director

Rick Gilmore, Director

**Division 2**

Absent

**Division 3**

Chris White, Director

Cannon Michael, Director

**Division 4**

Garth Hall, Alternate  
Sara Singleton, Alternate

**Division 5**

Tom Birmingham, Director  
Steve Stadler, Director

**Authority Representatives Present**

Federico Barajas, Executive Director  
Scott Petersen, Water Policy Director  
Rebecca Akroyd, General Counsel  
Pablo Arroyave, Chief Operating Officer  
Frances Mizuno, Assistant Executive Director (via Teleconference)

**Others Present**

Janet Roy, San Luis Water District  
Dana Jacobson, Valley Water  
Tom Boardman, Westlands Water District  
Chris Park, CDM  
Walter Bourez, MBK

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Tom Birmingham called the meeting to order.

**2. The Water Resources Committee to Consider Corrections or Additions to the Agenda of Items, as authorized by Government Code Section 54950 et seq**

No corrections or additions.

**3. Opportunity for Public Comment**

No public comment.

**4. Agenda Item 8: Presentation on B.F. Sisk Dam Raise.**

Chris Park from CDM, and Walter Bourez from MBK provided a brief overview of the B.F. Sisk Dam Raise Project. Park and Bourez went over a PowerPoint presentation with focus on the progress of the project, and the development of a model that addresses rescheduled water. The presentation is on file at the Authority office.

5.      **Agenda Item 4: Water Resources Committee to Consider Approval of the February 3, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

Chair Tom Birmingham pronounced the February 3, 2020 meeting minutes approved.

6.      **Agenda Item 5: Water Resources Committee to Consider Recommendation to the Board of Directors to Adopt Staff Recommendation for Positions on H.R. 5752 (Costa), Conveyance Capacity Correction Act, and Draft S. \_\_\_\_ (Feinstein), Restoration of Essential Conveyance Act.**

Water Policy Director Scott Petersen reported that staff recommends supporting two pieces of federal legislation: 1) a draft Feinstein bill, Restoration of Essential Conveyance Act, which would authorize \$200 million for restoration of conveyance capacity on the Friant-Kern Canal, \$200 million for restoration of conveyance capacity on the Delta-Mendota Canal, \$100 million for restoration of conveyance capacity of the San Luis Canal (joint reach of the California Aqueduct), \$100 million for restoration of conveyance capacity on the California Aqueduct, and \$200 million to implement the Restoration Goal of the San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Program, and 2) H.R. 5752 (Costa), Conveyance Capacity Correction Act, which would authorize the creation of \$400 million program for restoration of conveyance capacity on canals that convey water from estuaries that are “transferred works” or deliver water that is stored in a federal storage facility owned by Reclamation and that are operated by a State entity.

Member Cannon Michael made a motion that the committee recommend the Board of Directors adopt staff recommendation for positions on H.R. 5752 (Costa), Conveyance Capacity Correction Act, and draft S. \_\_\_\_ (Feinstein), Restoration of Essential Conveyance Act. The motion was seconded by Member Chris White and passed unanimously. The Committee action is reported as follows:

AYES:          Michael, White, Hall, Birmingham

NOES:          None

ABSTENTIONS: None

7.      **Agenda Item 6: Water Resources Committee to Consider Recommendation to Board of Directors to Authorize Execution of Agreement with State Water Contractors and**

**Expenditure of up to \$25,000 from the FY21 Technical Budget to Jointly Fund Technical Science Support for CSAMP Delta Smelt Structured Decision Making.**

Water Policy Director Scott Petersen reported that as previously discussed with the Authority Board, staff is focusing on four key areas for the FY2021 and future Science Program budgets, in order to assist in the development of a more coordinated science strategy between public water agencies and state and federal agencies who fund the scientific enterprise. Specifically, these recommended areas are: 1) Technical Support for Authority Engagement in Regulatory Processes, 2) Steelhead Monitoring and Protection, 3) Delta Smelt Structured Decision Making Scientific Expertise, and, if advanced, the 4) Development of Voluntary Agreement Science Plan. Petersen reported that Compass Resources has been hired by CSAMP to facilitate a structured decision making project to build consensus on a portfolio of recommended management and science actions to support recovery of delta smelt. Petersen reported that as this process moves forward there is a need to comprehensively document the evidence used and the rationale underlying these scoping decisions that the working group is making. Petersen reported that there is now an additional deliverable for this project: Identification and exploration of key effect pathways, that has required the need for additional biological support. Petersen reported that the State Water Contractors have agreed to jointly fund the approximate \$50,000 expenditure, and are taking it to their Board. Petersen reported that staff is recommending to jointly fund this work to advance the delta smelt structured decision making.

Member Garth Hall made a motion that the committee recommend the Board of Directors Authorize Execution of Agreement with State Water Contractors and Expenditure of up to \$25,000 from the FY21 Technical Budget to Jointly Fund Technical Science Support for CSAMP Delta Smelt Structured Decision Making. The motion was seconded by Member Cannon Michael and passed unanimously. The Committee action is reported as follows:

AYES: Michael, White, Hall, Birmingham

NOES: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

**8. Agenda Item 7: Water Resources Committee to Consider Recommendation to Board of Directors to Adopt Communications Plan.**

Water Policy Director Scott Petersen reported that the Strategic Plan identified seven goals and several objectives, and that the Communications Plan is designed to address implementation

for goal area 6. Effective Communications and Engagement with Key Parties. Petersen reported that in January, a draft communications plan was presented to the Board and subsequently, an ad-Hoc Communications Committee was formed to review the draft plan and provide additional input and recommendations. Petersen reported that the attached plan contains a number of target audiences and specified methods of engagement to provide outreach to each audience, as well as identified parties and timelines for doing so. Petersen reported that the ad-Hoc Communications Committee had a number of comments and suggestions that were addressed and incorporated into this draft.

After a lengthy discussion with staff and Committee members, the Committee recommended that staff clarify the issue of representation (who is leading who), and add information regarding internal communications. Executive Director Federico Barajas agreed that staff will work to clarify this area, and bring it back in April.

**9. Update on Water Policy/Resources Activities.**

Water Policy Director Scott Petersen reported that the Record of Decision for the biological opinions was signed February 18, 2020, and subsequent to that, the State of California filed litigation, asserting that the state performed an assessment that the operating rules proposed by federal agencies are not scientifically adequate and fall short of protecting species pursuant to the requirements of the Endangered Species Act and California's interests. Petersen reported that the impacts of this litigation remain unclear at this time, but it has created significant uncertainty in the many policy level items that are being worked on at this time.

Water Policy Director Scott Petersen reported that work has continued on the development of the Voluntary Agreements, and further work and analysis is needed to determine whether the agreements can meet environmental objectives required by law and identified in the State Water Board's update to the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan.

**10. Update on State and Federal Affairs.**

Water Policy Director Scott Petersen reported that he was in Washington DC with Executive Director Federico Barajas last week, and highlighted a couple of key items important for the Authority: 1) WIFIA loan funding for Jones PP, and 2) funding for DMC canal conveyance issues.

Petersen reported that the House will be consumed with coronavirus response, likely advancing a \$6-8 billion emergency supplemental appropriations bill in the next two weeks.

Petersen reported that the House passed H.R. 3399, which has been amended to authorize \$12 million annually from fiscal 2021 through 2025 to support states affected by invasive nutria, passed the House unanimously last week. The Interior Department would be allowed to provide financial assistance to any state that has demonstrated need for a program to address nutria invasion and to restore damaged marshes, public and private wetlands, and agricultural lands. Authority staff will be working with Representative Harder's office to secure passage in the Senate.

Petersen reported that Katharine MacGregor, the nominee for Deputy Secretary of the Interior was confirmed.

Petersen also reported that staff is working on setting up a tour with Secretary Crowfoot.

## **II. Executive Director's Report.**

Executive Director Federico Barajas welcomed new Committee Member Garth Hall.

Barajas reported that the initial 2020 Water Allocation was announced by Reclamation last week, and the Authority sent out a statement regarding the Allocation. Barajas reported that last month is expected to be the driest month on record. Barajas reported that through implementation of the Biological Opinions, and making the best out of the operations that they have to work with, Reclamation deserves some credit even though the numbers are what they are.

Barajas reported that Chief Operating Officer Pablo Arroyave has initiated bi-weekly South of Delta operations calls with Reclamation.

## **12. Chief Operating Officer's Report.**

Chief Operating Officer Pablo Arroyave reported that work on the Unit 2 rewind continues, and should be back online in late May.

Arroyave reported that O'Neill unit should be back online by the end of March, which is ahead of schedule.

Arroyave reported that work continues on North of Delta Transfer Program, and the only districts participating are Panoche, Pacheco, Mercy Springs, and Westlands.

Assistant Executive Director Frances Mizuno reported that there may be opportunity to back up crop idling water in Shasta in addition to the forbearance component of the project.

**13. Update on Water Operations and Forecasts**

Westlands Water District's Tom Boardman reported that Jones Pumping Plant struggled to maintain a one-unit operation during the record breaking dry February. Pumping was limited by an elevated delta outflow requirement per D1641 but is expected to increase soon because of a lower outflow requirement during March.

Boardman also reported that Reclamation's operations forecast supporting initial allocations was noticeably less conservative compared to past years. There was some discussion regarding the potential of triggering a Shasta critical year and the possibility of drawing CVP San Luis storage into the negative by late August if dry conditions exceed what Reclamation has projected in its operations studies.

**14. Committee Member Reports.**

No reports.

**15. Closed Session**

Chair Tom Birmingham adjourned the open session to address the items listed on the Closed Session Agenda at approximately 11:35 a.m. Upon return to open session at approximately 11:40 a.m., General Counsel Rebecca Akroyd reported that there were no reportable actions taken in closed session.

**16. Reports Pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.2**

None.

**17. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:45 a.m.