

**SAN LUIS & DELTA-MENDOTA WATER AUTHORITY BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES MARCH 12, 2023**

The Board of Directors of the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority convened at approximately 9:30 a.m. at 842 6th Street in Los Banos, California, with Chair Cannon Michael presiding.

**Directors and Alternate Directors in Attendance**

**Division 1**

Dave Weisenberger, Director  
Bobby Pierce, Director  
Anthea Hansen, Director  
Lea Emmons, Alternate

**Division 2**

Ross Franson, Director  
William Bourdeau, Director  
Beau Correia, Director  
Bill Diedrich, Director

**Division 3**

Dan McCurdy, Director - Chris White, Alternate  
Jarrett Martin, Director  
Cannon Michael, Director  
Ric Ortega, Director - Ellen Wehr, Alternate

**Division 4**

Aaron Baker, Alternate for John Varela  
Richard Santos, Director  
Steve Wittry, Director  
Joyce Machado, Alternate for Joe Tonascia

**Division 5**

Bill Pucheu, Director  
Jose Gutierrez, Alternate  
Manny Amorelli, Director

**Authority Representatives Present**

Federico Barajas, Executive Director  
Pablo Arroyave, Chief Operating Officer  
Rebecca Akroyd, General Counsel  
Rebecca Harms, Deputy General Counsel  
Scott Petersen, Water Policy Director  
Ray Tarka, Director of Finance  
Cindy Meyer, Special Programs Manager (via ZOOM)  
Stewart Davis, IT Officer

**Others in Attendance**

Mike Wade, Farm Water Coalition (via ZOOM)  
Dana Jacobson, Valley Water

Vince Gin, Valley Water  
 Ed Pattison, Byron Bethany Irrigation District  
 Chase Hurley, Pacheco Water District  
 Mitch Partovi, Water Agency  
 Dennis Cardoza, Foley & Lardner, LLP (via ZOOM)  
 Bill Ball, Foley, Foley & Lardner, LLP (via ZOOM)  
 Kristin Olsen, Calstrat (via ZOOM)  
 Steve Stadler, San Luis Water District  
 Don Wright, Water Wrights (via ZOOM)  
 Justin Diener, Westlands Water District (via ZOOM)  
 Jim Thoming, Banta-Carbona Irrigation District (via ZOOM)  
 Taryn Ravazzini, Los Vaqueros JPA  
 Will Gleason (via ZOOM)  
 Sarah Woolf, Water Wise

**1. Call to Order/Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Cannon Michael and roll was called.

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

No additions or corrections.

**3. Opportunity for Public Comment**

No reports.

**CONSENT ITEMS**

**4. Agenda Items 4-6: Board to Consider: a) February 19, 2023 Meeting Minutes, and February 9, 2023 Special Workshop Minutes b) Acceptance of the Financial & Expenditures Reports, c) Staff Reports.**

On a motion of Director Ric Ortega, seconded by Director Richard Santos, the Board accepted the February 9, 2023 Meeting Minutes, February 9, 2023 Special Workshop Minutes, Financial Expenditures Reports, and Staff Reports. The vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES:	Weisenberger, Pierce, Hansen, Emmons, Franson, Bourdeau, Correia, Diedrich, McCurdy, Jarrett Martin, Michael, Ortega, Baker, Santos, Wittry, Machado, Pucheu, Gutierrez, Amorelli
NAYS:	None
ABSTENTIONS:	None

**ACTION ITEMS**

**5. Agenda Item 7: Board of Directors to Consider Selection and Appointment of Fiscal Year 2024 San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority Board Officers.**

Executive Director Federico Barajas reviewed the memo included in the packet. Barajas reported that the Authority’s Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement provides for the selection of a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. Barajas reported that in contrast to the Treasurer, who serves at the pleasure of the Board, the Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary hold office for a period of one year commencing the first meeting of each Fiscal Year. Barajas reported that the Authority’s Fiscal Year 2024 begins March 1, 2023.

On a motion of Director Dave Weisenberger, seconded by Director Bill Diedrich, the Board re-appointed Director Cannon Michael as Chair, Director William Bourdeau as Vice-Chair, and Executive Director Federico Barajas as Secretary. The vote on the motion was as follows:

- AYES: Weisenberger, Pierce, Hansen, Emmons, Franson, Bourdeau, Correia, Diedrich, McCurdy, Jarrett Martin, Michael, Ortega, Baker, Santos, Wittry, Machado, Pucheu, Gutierrez, Amorelli
- NAYS: None
- ABSTENTIONS: None

**6. Agenda Item 8: Board of Directors to Consider Water Resources Committee Regarding Adoption of Staff Recommendation for Positions on Legislation.**

- a. **SB 23 (Caballero), Expedited Permitting for Water Supply and Flood Risk Reduction Project** –Water Policy Director Scott Petersen reported that SB 23 is sponsored by the Association of California Water Agencies. Petersen reported that the bill contains numerous provisions seeking to increase the efficiency of the regulatory permitting process for water supply and flood risk reduction projects, without exemption from any environmental protections.
- b. **SB 361 (Dodd), Water Resources: Stream Gages** – Water Policy Director Scott Petersen reported that this bill would require DWR and the State Water Board, upon appropriation of funds by the Legislature, to reactivate, upgrade, and install new stream gages where lack of data contributes to conflicts in water management or where water can be more effectively managed for multiple benefits.

On a motion of Director William Bourdeau, seconded by Director Dan McCurdy, the Board adopted the staff recommendation for positions on legislation. The vote on the motion was as follows:

- AYES: Weisenberger, Pierce, Hansen, Emmons, Franson, Bourdeau, Correia, Diedrich, McCurdy, Jarrett Martin, Michael, Ortega, Baker, Santos, Wittry, Machado, Pucheu, Gutierrez, Amorelli
- NAYS: None
- ABSTENTIONS: None

**7. Agenda Item 9: Board of Directors to Consider Finance & Administration Committee Recommendation Regarding Execution of Contract Extension with External Auditors.**

Director of Finance Ray Tarka reviewed the memo included in the packet. Tarka reported that based on the previous services provided by Richardson & Company, LLP, and the reasonable quotation received for an extension of services, which is within the authorized budget, staff recommends execution of a contract extension with Richardson & Company, LLP, including Brian Nash, its audit engagement partner, for one additional year. Chair Cannon Michael reported that the Finance & Administration Committee agreed with the recommendation.

On a motion of Director Bobby Pierce, seconded by Alternate Director Lea Emmons, the Board approved execution of contract extension with external auditors. The vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES:	Weisenberger, Pierce, Hansen, Emmons, Franson, Bourdeau, Correia, Diedrich, McCurdy, Jarrett Martin, Michael, Ortega, Baker, Santos, Wittry, Machado, Pucheu, Gutierrez, Amorelli
NAYS:	None
ABSTENTIONS:	None

**8. Item 10: Board of Directors to Consider Finance & Administration Committee Recommendation Regarding Adjustment to Water Year 2023 OM&R Water Rates.**

Executive Director Federico Barajas reviewed the memo included in the packet. Barajas reported that in light of favorable hydrology and initial water allocation announcement by Reclamation, staff recommends approval of Revised Water Year 2023 OM&R water rates as calculated on the 35% agricultural contractor allocation, 75% municipal and industrial allocation, and member-reported estimated deliveries applied retroactively to deliveries made on or after March 1, 2023. Barajas reported that the Finance & Administration Committee agreed with the recommendation. Director of Finance Ray Tarka walked the Board through the difference in rates based on the previously approved 10%. Barajas reported that while it is not the Authority's standard practice to make frequent adjustments of OM&R rates, staff is recommending this adjustment as a result of the recent water allocation announcement by Reclamation. The Board and Staff discussed the possibility of additional adjustments in response to any additional increases greater than 25%.

On a motion of Director Bill Pucheu, seconded by Director Richard Santos, the Board approved the adjustment to the OM&R Water Rates. The vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES:	Weisenberger, Pierce, Hansen, Emmons, Franson, Bourdeau, Correia, Diedrich, McCurdy, Jarrett Martin, Michael, Ortega, Baker, Santos,
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Wittry, Machado, Pucheu, Gutierrez, Amorelli

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

## REPORT ITEMS

### 9. Agenda Item 11: Update on Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Project.

Chief Operating Officer Pablo Arroyave introduced Taryn Ravazzini from the Los Vaqueros JPA. Ravazzini walked through a PowerPoint presentation that provided a project overview, described Authority members' participation, and discussed the status of the Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Project.

### 10. Agenda Item 12: Update on Strategic Plan Implementation Progress.

Executive Director Federico Barajas reviewed the memo and attachments included in the packet. Barajas reported that staff will identify new high priority items with the Board as part of the upcoming Strategic Plan update. Barajas reported that he is the process of securing a contract with Rauch Communication Consultants Inc. Barajas reported that Martin Rauch will initiate individual interviews with Authority Board members as part of the Strategic Plan update. Barajas reported that the initial Strategic Plan workshop will likely be in mid-April. Chair Cannon Michael encouraged the Board to participate in the Strategic Plan process.

### 11. Agenda Item 13: Report on State and Federal Affairs.

Water Policy Director Scott Petersen reported that Authority Chair Cannon Michael, Executive Director Federico Barajas, and he visited delegation staff and administration staff in Washington, DC, during the last week of February to do meet and greets with new delegation members and staff and to discuss various priorities.

Petersen reported that the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) announced it has hired Mr. Michael Drummond as director for permitting and innovation. Petersen reported that CEQ is responsible for overseeing the implementation of NEPA, which requires agencies to assess the environmental impacts of their actions. Petersen reported that at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), President Biden announced that he's chosen a former New Mexico congresswoman Xochitl Torres Small to serve as the next Deputy Secretary of the Agriculture Department.

Petersen reported that President Joe Biden released his budget proposal for the coming fiscal year today and our consultants are analyzing the budget and will prepare a memo on key funding pools of interest.

Petersen reported that CEQ has sent the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) a second phase of changes to NEPA standards. Petersen reported that the updated guidance calls for

federal agencies to take a broader look at the climate change impacts from major new infrastructure projects, government policies and federal decisions. Petersen reported that the often slow and cumbersome federal regulatory process is a major obstacle to realization of projects and actions that could enhance Western water supplies.

Petersen reported that the Senate Appropriations Committee recently announced that the committee will again be accepting earmark requests from senators for the FY 2024 appropriations cycle, in addition to posting a list of subcommittee deadlines for senators to submit FY24 earmark requests back to the Committee, which range from March 30—April 13, 2023. Many Senate offices have now set internal deadlines for public entities to submit FY24 earmark requests to their office, ranging from February 28-March 24. Petersen reported that all Senate earmark accounts that were available for FY23 are, once again, available in FY24 and no new accounts have been added.

Dennis Cardoza, and Bill Ball provided additional information on federal affairs.

Petersen reported that Jay Ziegler has been announced as the new Delta Watermaster. Petersen reported that Jay will begin his new position on April 3, 2023.

Petersen reported that California's severe budget picture got worse in February when personal and corporate income taxes paid to the state fell short of projections, according the Assembly Democrats budget adviser. Petersen reported that the lower-than-expected tax receipts deepen a projected deficit that Newsom's administration earlier this year pegged at \$22.5 billion. Petersen reported that Newsom's initial budget proposal, released in January, called for cuts and delays in climate, transportation and other spending, rather than dipping into the state's rainy day fund, to make up for the shortfall. Petersen reported that Legislators have been weighing other options in budget hearings.

Petersen reported California Air Resources Board staff members are expected to issue a formal proposal in mid-March with specific rules and requirements for transitioning medium- and heavy-duty trucks to zero-emission by 2045. Petersen reported that that's the date Gov. Gavin Newsom identified in a 2020 executive order. Petersen reported staff is working with California Strategies to schedule a workshop for Member Agencies in March or early April.

Petersen reported that Authority staff and consultants are reviewing the 2,632 bills introduced in the California State Legislature prior to the February 17 bill introduction deadline-the most bills introduced in over a decade. Petersen reported that the Water Resources Committee and Board will continue to meet to adopt legislative positions, as appropriate. Petersen reported that the work will not stop there as many authors will amend their bills after they are in print for the Constitutionally required 30-day period.

Kristin Olsen provided additional information on state affairs.

## 12. Agenda Item 14: Executive Director's Report.

### a. Finance & Administration Committee (FAC) Workshop- Executive Director

Federico Barajas reported that a FAC Ratesetting workshop is scheduled for Monday, March 13, 2023.

- b. **Local Board Meetings** – Executive Director Federico Barajas reported that he will be attending member agency Board meetings in the future.
- c. **Washington D.C.** –Executive Director Federico Barajas reported that there will be a follow-up DC trip later in the spring.

### 13. **Agenda Item 13: Chief Operating Officer’s Report**

Chief Operating Officer Pablo Arroyave reported that with all units at Jones Pumping Plant and O’Neill operating, along with the DCI, the Authority has been pumping significant quantities of water into the San Luis Reservoir since March 1, 2023. Arroyave reported that if that level continues the federal side could fill by April 6, 2023.

Arroyave reported that in February staff hosted three Board members Dave Weisenberger, Bill Diedrich, and Lea Emmons out at the Tracy Fish Facility providing them with a view of the debris at the facility. Arroyave reported that there was a tremendous amount of debris backing up against the Fish Facility, which could have prevented use of all Jones Pumping Plant units. Arroyave reported that with the Bureau of Reclamation allowing the Authority to have five staff members at the facility throughout the weekends, the debris was cleared.

Arroyave reported that California Boats & Waterways has an RFP out for contractors to bid on treatment of hyacinth, and other vegetation.

### 14. **Agenda Item 14: Update on Water Operations and Forecasts**

Chief Operating Officer Pablo Arroyave introduced Liz Kiteck from the Central Valley Operations Office (CVO) of the Bureau of Reclamation to provide an overview of CVP water operations and the latest forecasts. Ms. Kiteck stated that the federal side of San Luis Reservoir is expected to fill in approximately another month and that the latest storms increased inflow because of mid-elevation rain on snow. While snowpack is at unprecedented levels in the south, snowpack is lower in the north. Specifically, the Trinity Basin snowpack is approximately 33% of April 1<sup>st</sup> average and Shasta snowpack is approximately 62% of the April 1<sup>st</sup> average. Folsom operations, expected inflow and snowpack numbers were discussed and Mr. Kiteck stated that CVO would begin working on the March forecast on March 10<sup>th</sup>. At this point, Reclamation anticipates updating allocations CVP-wide in approximately 2-weeks. In response to an observation that the Kings River runoff forecast is similar to 2017, Ms. Kiteck was asked to consider how long San Joaquin River flood releases may be projected to meet Exchange Contractor demands. Ms. Kiteck stated that CVO would be looking into that for the next forecast and her presentation concluded.

15. **Agenda Item 15: Committee Reports.**

- a. **Water Resources Committee** – Chair William Bourdeau reported that the committee met and addressed agenda items.
- b. **Finance & Administration Committee** – Chair Anthea Hansen reported that the committee met and addressed agenda items.
- c. **O&M Committee** – No report.

16. **Agenda Item 16: Outside Agency/Organization Reports.**

- a. **State and Federal Contractors Water Agency (SFCWA)** – Executive Director Federico Barajas reported that a meeting was held last month. Barajas reported that the two key topics discussed were reimbursement from Westlands, and administrative issues regarding CALPERS. Barajas reported that there will be another meeting in April.
- b. **Family Farm Alliance (FFA)** – Report included in the packet.
- c. **Farm Water Coalition** – Mike Wade reported several ongoing items in partnership with the Water Authority Wade reported that he was appointed to ACWA Elections Committee.
- d. **Association of California Water Agencies** - Director Bill Diedrich reported that the ACWA Board has decided to have a more formal election process. Bourdeau reported that part of that process was establishing an election committee.
- e. **Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley (WBSJV)** - Water Policy Director Scott Petersen reported that the Water Blueprint will hold its next Board meeting and Large Group meeting on March 15 at the International Agri-Center in Visalia. Petersen reported that the guest at the Large Group meeting will be PPIC Water Policy Center Director Ellen Hanak and Alvar Escrivá-Bou, lead author of the Policy Brief: “The Future of Agriculture in the San Joaquin Valley.”
- f. **SJV CAP** - Water Policy Director Scott Petersen reported that during the most recent Plenary Group meeting on February 28, the CAP Plenary authorized the formation of a number of different work groups, which will be tasked with creating priorities to implement various provisions of the approved Term Sheet. Petersen reported that the CAP Steering Committee met and the Steering Committee provided direction that given the importance of having a broad set of representatives from each CAP Caucus on each Work Group, the Steering Committee authorized staff of participating organizations to join work groups, as desired. Petersen reported that it would be beneficial to have more west-side representation on the various workgroups to ensure our interests are represented in the various discussions. Petersen requested that members let him know if any member agency representatives would



like to participate in any of the CAP Work Groups.

- g. CVPWA – Director Anthea Hansen reported that the monthly Financial Affairs Committee meeting has been moved to March 22, 2023, and Regional Director Ernest Conant will be speaking at this meeting.

**17. Agenda Item 17: Board Member Reports.**

Director Anthea Hansen thanked Authority staff for assisting her and Director Chris White with a tour of the Jones Pumping Plant on Saturday with a group of teenagers from the Patterson Outdoor Education Program.

Chair Cannon Michael reported that previous Director Gary Kremen, and his partner had a baby last week for anyone that wanted to reach out.

**18. Agenda Items 18-19: Closed Session Report.**

Chair Cannon Michael adjourned the open session to address the items listed on the Closed Session Agenda at approximately 11:25 a.m. Upon return to open session at approximately 11:55 a.m., Chair Cannon Michael stated that no reportable actions were taken.

**19. Agenda Item 20: Reports Pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.2(a)(3)**

No report.

**20. Agenda Item 21: Adjournment.**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:56 a.m.