

**Minutes of the Regular Commission Meeting of the
Southern California Coastal Water Research Project Authority (SCCWRP)**

**Held at the offices of the Authority:
3535 Harbor Blvd., Costa Mesa, California 92626**

**September 11, 2015
9:30 AM**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

John Kemmerer — *US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region IX*
Vicky Whitney — *State Water Resources Control Board*
Catherine Kuhlman — *California Ocean Protection Council*
Sam Unger — *Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Kurt Berchtold (Chair) — *Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Mas Dojiri — *City of Los Angeles*
Phil Friess — *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*
Bob Ghirelli — *Orange County Sanitation District*
Peter Vroom — *City of San Diego*
Gerhardt Hubner (Vice-Chair) — *Ventura County Watershed Protection District*
Gary Hildebrand — *Los Angeles County Department of Public Works*
Mary Anne Skorpanich — *County of Orange*
Todd Snyder — *County of San Diego*

STAFF PRESENT

Stephen Weisberg — *Executive Director*
Bryan Nece — *Administrative Officer*
Wesley Beverlin — *Legal Counsel*
Ken Schiff — *Deputy Director*
Steve Bay — *Principal Scientist*
John Griffith — *Principal Scientist*
Keith Maruya — *Principal Scientist*
Eric Stein — *Principal Scientist*
Steve Steinberg — *Principal Scientist*
Martha Sutula — *Principal Scientist*
Yiping Cao — *Senior Scientist*
Scott Martindale — *Editor*
Joshua Steele — *Scientist*

OTHERS PRESENT

Jeff Armstrong — *Orange County Sanitation District*
Joe Gully (CTAG Past Chair) — *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*
Janet Hashimoto — *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region IX*

Commission Chair Kurt Berchtold called the meeting to order at 9:31 AM.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Minutes of Meeting Held June 5, 2015

2. Quarterly Financial Statement for the Period Ended June 30, 2015

3. Quarterly Statement of Investments at June 30, 2015

4. Minutes of CTAG Meetings Held August 13, 2015

Commissioner Hildebrand motioned to approve Consent Items 1-4 with a minor edit to SCCWRP's minutes, and Commissioner Whitney seconded the motion. The Commission approved the motion unanimously, with Commissioner Kemmerer abstaining on all items.

Commissioner Kemmerer noted that because USEPA representatives serve on the Commission as non-voting technical advisors, it is not necessary to call on EPA to abstain from items as they come up for votes.

REGULAR AGENDA

5. Personnel and Finance Committee Report

Commissioner Ghirelli reported that SCCWRP is in strong financial health, ending fiscal year 2014-15 with a \$200,000 surplus and more than \$2 million in reserves. Ghirelli also reported that the Personnel and Finance Committee reviewed the draft Joint Powers Agreement covering 2017-21 (the Commission's next agenda item) and is recommending Commission approval.

6. Joint Powers Agreement

Executive Director Weisberg explained that the Commission must approve an updated version of SCCWRP's JPA every four years to extend the agency's existence. The 2017-21 draft JPA incorporates the increased member dues that the Commission agreed to at its June 2015 meeting, and also reflects the agency's new mission and vision statement. Weisberg said the draft JPA had already been sent to the signatory agencies for review, and that the signatory agencies provided preliminary feedback indicating that the JPA is ready for approval.

Commissioner Kuhlman requested a minor change to the way her job title appears in the JPA.

Executive Director Weisberg expressed concern about possible ramifications for the JPA due to the fact that the EPA Commissioner serves as a non-voting technical adviser. It was agreed that there would be follow-up discussions with Commissioner Kemmerer to further consider this.

The Commission tabled its vote on the JPA pending discussion with Commissioner Kemmerer about potential modifications. Weisberg reminded the Commission that it

typically takes 12-18 months to obtain signatures, so it is important to bring this item back to the Commission for final approval in December 2015.

7. Election of Commission Chair and Vice-Chair

Executive Director Weisberg explained that the Commission Chair and Vice-Chair nominally serve one-year terms, but traditionally are re-elected for a second term. The present leadership has served for two years. Commission Chair Berchtold requested nominations for Chair. Commissioner Dojiri nominated Commission Vice-Chair Hubner, and Commissioner Hildebrand seconded the nomination. The Commission approved Hubner's nomination unanimously, with Commissioner Kemmerer abstaining. Leadership of the meeting transitioned from Berchtold to Hubner.

New Commission Chair Hubner expressed his gratitude to the Commission for the recognition, and thanked Commissioner Berchtold for his four years of leadership service to the Commission (two years as Vice Chair, and two years as Chair).

Hubner requested nominations for Vice-Chair. Commissioner Berchtold nominated Commissioner Kuhlman, and Commissioner Dojiri seconded the nomination. The Commission approved the nomination unanimously, with Commissioner Kemmerer abstaining. New Commission Vice-Chair Kuhlman expressed her appreciation for the recognition.

8. Future Meeting Dates

Executive Director Weisberg proposed the following dates for the 2016 Commission meetings:

- March 4
- June 3
- September 9
- December 2

No Commissioners expressed conflicts. The September 9 meeting was proposed for the second Friday of the month, instead of the traditional first Friday of the month, to accommodate the Labor Day holiday. Commissioner Dojiri motioned to approve the meeting dates, and Commissioner Skorpanich seconded the motion. The Commission approved the motion unanimously, with Commissioner Kemmerer abstaining.

9. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Weisberg opened his report by announcing the appointment of Jennifer Phillips as the new Alternate Commissioner for the California Ocean Protection Council (OPC), filling a vacancy. He indicated that Phillips previously worked for the NOAA Administrator in Washington, D.C. before coming to the OPC. Commissioner Kuhlman said that Phillips is bright, well-organized, thoughtful, and looking forward to being a member of the Commission.

Weisberg reported that SCCWRP constantly evaluates the agency's effectiveness using a variety of performance metrics. One of those metrics is the rate at which SCCWRP's publications are being cited in scientific literature. SCCWRP's normalized citation rate for

its publication is 1.23 this year, meaning that SCCWRP's citation rate is 23% better than average. The University of California schools hover around 1.4, and the California State University schools hover around 1.0, so SCCWRP's placement in the middle is competitive. Weisberg also indicated that 2.6% of SCCWRP publications appear in the top 1% of highly cited publications, meaning that SCCWRP has authored a disproportionately large share of highly cited publications.

Weisberg reported that SCCWRP also prides itself on its effectiveness at building scientific consensus among the broader scientific and management communities. In the month of October, SCCWRP will host three high-profile meetings toward that objective: (1) the State of California Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP) Expert Review Panel will meet October 14-16 to get community feedback on its draft report that includes a series of recommendations for reforming the State's program for accrediting environmental laboratories, (2) the California Coastal Coalition, a nonprofit representing 35 coastal cities, will hold a drought workshop October 20-21 to discuss water conservation and reuse solutions, and (3) the State Water Board will host a workshop collaboratively with SCCWRP, the National Water Research Institute and the Water Reuse Research Foundation (now known as WateReuse) on October 27-28 to prioritize research needs for assessing and treating emerging contaminants in reuse applications. Weisberg also reported on SCCWRP's partnership with the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, in which SCCWRP science provided much of the technical foundation for the Restoration Commission's 2015 State of the Bay conference; SCCWRP Principal Scientists Steve Bay and Eric Stein served on its technical advisory committee and co-led the conference plenary session.

Weisberg asked Commissioners for feedback on the new Director's Report style, as the primary audience for the document is the Commission. Several Commissioners noted that the new Director's Report is far more engaging, shareable, and contemporary. They also noted that it has less technical details than the old report, but that they prefer the new approach. In response to a question from Commissioner Friess about how Commissioners will get the technical details going forward, Weisberg urged Commissioners to call or email him at any time to get more information about any project. Weisberg also urged Commissioners to let him know which projects they would like to see highlighted in future Director's Reports.

10. CTAG Report

Past CTAG Chair Joe Gully presented the CTAG report on behalf of CTAG Chair Greg Gearheart, who was ill. Gully said CTAG is happy with the new style of the Director's Report, but had some concern that articles focus only on the positive and wanted Commission feedback on whether SCCWRP should incorporate into the articles the challenges that SCCWRP encounters in its research. The Commission briefly discussed the issue and agreed that the Director's Report should present both successes and difficulties.

Gully announced that Paul Alva of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District was elected CTAG Vice-Chair.

Gully said that CTAG's all-day Microbial Water Quality research planning workshop will be held October 8. Instead of producing a full Research Plan for Microbial Water Quality immediately following the workshop, CTAG will be reevaluating the format of the Research Plan write-ups. CTAG has asked SCCWRP staff to produce multiple alternative versions of the full Research Plan on Bioassessment, which will be considered at CTAG's November 2015 meeting.

Gully said CTAG recommends approval of all contracts except Contracts 2 and 3, which CTAG did not review.

11. Contract Review

SCCWRP's Joint Powers Agreement requires Commission approval of contracts in excess of \$250,000, and the State of California requests a resolution of acceptance for contracts exceeding \$100,000 offered by the State or Regional Water Boards. Weisberg recommended approval of the following contract:

- 1) State Water Resources Control Board (\$300,000)
Passive Sampling Screening of San Diego Bay Sediments
- 2) State Water Resources Control Board (\$135,000)
California Data Center
- 3) State Water Resources Control Board (\$150,000)
In Vitro and Non-Targeted Screening of CECs in Los Angeles Watersheds

Commissioner Ghirelli motioned to approve the contracts, and Commissioner Kuhlman seconded the motion. The Commission approved the motion unanimously, with Commissioners Whitney and Kemmerer abstaining.

As an informational item, Weisberg also presented contracts with a value of \$250,000 or less, which SCCWRP has accepted or indicated a willingness to accept. While SCCWRP's governing agreement requires no Commission action on these, the contracts were presented to ensure consistency of the agency's directions with the Commission's intentions.

- 4) County of Orange (\$22,814)
County of Los Angeles (\$22,814)
County of San Diego (\$22,814)
County of Riverside (\$22,814)
County of San Bernardino (\$22,814)
County of Ventura (\$22,814)
City of San Diego (\$22,814)
City of Los Angeles (\$22,814)
City of Long Beach (\$11,407)
CalTrans (\$7,000)
SMC Regional Monitoring Technical Support

- 5) Moss Landing Marine Laboratory/San Jose State University (\$84,950)
California Stream Condition Index Scoring Tool
- 6) Laguna Ocean Foundation (\$10,000)
Conceptual Design Charrette
- 7) San Diego Unified Port District (\$22,500)
City of San Diego (through AMEC) (\$22,500)
Fish Consumption Study
- 8) Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (\$20,000)
West Coast Governors Alliance on Ocean Health
- 9) City of San Diego (through AMEC) (\$70,000)
County of Orange (\$180,000)
Reference Beach Bacteria Study
- 10) NOAA (\$204,373)
Improving tools for monitoring multiple harmful algal bloom toxins at the land-sea interface in coastal California

The Commission did not raise any objections to the contracts.

12. Microbial Water Quality

Executive Director Weisberg opened the Microbial Water Quality presentation by noting that SCCWRP embarked on microbiology as a focus area two decades ago and has become a world leader in developing water quality monitoring applications. SCCWRP was instrumental in adoption of the Idexx chromogenic substrate technique that is the most prominent method in current use, and in advancement of molecular technologies that allow for both more rapid measurement and source identification.

John Griffith, head of the Microbiology Department, explained that SCCWRP has built its reputation on being an honest broker whose research is embraced by both academics and the commercial industry, which recognize SCCWRP's ability to link science to management application. Griffith discussed SCCWRP's three main lines of microbiology research: rapid methods for detecting microbial contamination, rapid identification of sources of contamination, and epidemiology/risk modeling for aquatic contamination.

On the rapid methods front, SCCWRP has been working to develop a portable, suitcase-sized instrument to rapidly detect microbial contamination under field conditions. The instrument will be so simple to use that it could be operated by a beach lifeguard, and will produce results within two hours, down from the current turnaround time of about 24 hours. Griffith said the technology is an estimated to be three to five years away from being commercially available, but that member agencies will be part of SCCWRP's pilot field testing of the instrument, commencing spring 2016.

On the microbial source identification front, SCCWRP is building a model that will allow managers to understand the degradation rates of source identification markers in relation to degradation rates of the pathogens of interest, which will enhance interpretability and usefulness of the markers. This work follows SCCWRP's highly successful effort to establish consensus on which source identification markers are most useful for tracking contamination.

On the epidemiology front, SCCWRP is working on data analysis for its wet-weather Surfer Health Study that will determine whether current dry-weather-derived standards are appropriate for wet-weather conditions. SCCWRP also is conducting a pilot study that will help in developing guidelines for how to use the Quantitative Microbial Risk Assessment (QMRA) method to establish site-specific microbiology objectives.

Asked by Commissioner Hubner about the State's interest in wet-weather water-quality issues, Commissioner Whitney said it is not a State Water Board priority, but that the State is supportive of wet-weather research and has been providing funding for it.

13. Future Meeting Agenda Items

The 2017-21 draft JPA will come before the Commission for final approval in December 2015. The next thematic research topic to be presented to the Commission will be ecohydrology.

14. Other Business and Communications

None

15. Public Comments

No public comments were raised.

16. Adjournment

Commission Chair Hubner adjourned the meeting at 11:42 AM until the next Commission meeting on December 4, 2015.

Attest:

Bryan Nece
Secretary