

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE COMMISSION OF  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COASTAL WATER RESEARCH PROJECT AUTHORITY**

**HELD AT THE OFFICES OF THE AUTHORITY  
3535 Harbor Blvd., Costa Mesa, California 92626**

**September 12, 2008  
9:30 a.m.**

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**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

David Barker - *Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region*  
Drew Bohan – *Ocean Protection Council*  
Mas Dojiri - *City of Los Angeles*  
Tracy Egoscue - *Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region*  
Robert Ghirelli - *Orange County Sanitation District*  
Janet Hashimoto - *US Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX*  
Gerhardt Hubner – *Ventura County Watershed Protection District*  
Alan Langworthy - *City of San Diego*  
Steve Maguin - *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*  
Darrin Polhemus - *State Water Resources Control Board*  
Mary Anne Skorpanich - *County of Orange*  
Cid Tesoro – *County of San Diego*  
Gerry Thibeault - *Regional Water Quality Control Board, Santa Ana Region*  
Enrique Zaldivar - *City of Los Angeles*

**STAFF PRESENT**

Stephen Weisberg - *Executive Director*  
B. Richard Marsh - *Legal Counsel*  
Ken Schiff - *Deputy Director*  
Bryan Nece – *Administrative Officer*  
Steve Bay - *Principal Investigator*  
Keith Maruya - *Principal Investigator*  
Eric Stein - *Principal Investigator*  
Karen Setty – *Science Writer*

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Frances Spivy-Weber - *State Water Resources Control Board*  
Phil Friess - *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*  
Joe Gully - *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*  
Gerry McGowen – *City of Los Angeles*  
George Robertson - *Orange County Sanitation District*  
Tim Stebbins – *City of San Diego*  
Art Coe – *Public*

Commission Chair Polhemus called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

- 1. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD JUNE 13, 2008**
- 2. QUARTERLY FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED JUNE 30, 2008**
- 3. QUARTERLY STATEMENT OF INVESTMENTS AT JUNE 30, 2008**
- 4. MINUTES OF CTAG MEETINGS OF MAY 29, 2008**

Commissioner Maguin motioned for approval of consent items, which was seconded by Commissioner Dojiri. The consent items were unanimously approved with a few typographical corrections to the meeting minutes.

Commissioner Tesoro arrived at 9:45 am.

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

### **5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

The Executive Director began his report by welcoming new Commissioner Zaldivar from the City of Los Angeles. He then highlighted the Agency's productivity over the last quarter, starting with the beach epidemiology studies. SCCWRP recruited over 7,000 participants at Avalon Beach and over 12,000 at Doheny Beach, making this one of the largest and most comprehensive beach epidemiology study ever executed. A wide range of bacterial counts was found at both sites, which is important for the goal of evaluating new water quality indicators and thresholds. Results of these studies will be available for the March Commission meeting. The Executive Director also noted progress in SCCWRP's research to support the State's Sediment Quality Objectives (SQOs). Research on the direct effects of sediment contamination on marine life was completed and adoption of SQOs was on the agenda for the next SWRCB meeting. The next step in SQOs, investigation of indirect effects of sediment contamination (i.e., food chain transfer), had already commenced.

Dr. Weisberg then announced the hiring of a new head for the Biology Department, Dr. Peter Miller from UC Santa Cruz. Dr. Miller's research will focus on transitioning new, molecular-based technology from the research laboratory to managers of the coastal environment. As a start, Dr. Miller will be joining Dr. Weisberg at a conference in October entitled "Accelerating Innovation in 21st Century Biosciences: Identifying the Measurement Standards and Technological Challenges" where the Executive Director will be the Plenary Speaker. The goal of the conference is to assist the National Institute of Standards and Technology in developing a Biosciences Division.

Dr. Weisberg next described a new project through the SWRCB's Clean Beach Task Force, which advises the SWRCB staff on how to improve beach water quality. The Task Force has identified that the State has already remedied beaches where the fecal sources are apparent and recommended creation of a source identification team that will focus on developing and implementing methodologies to identify bacterial sources for mitigation at the remaining beaches that routinely fail water quality standards. SCCWRP has been asked to lead that team.

The Executive Director next described a series of new relationships that the Agency has formed. First, Dr. Weisberg had been appointed to the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Science Advisory Team. Second, Agency scientists had recently interacted with CalFire, FEMA, and other emergency preparedness organizations as part of the research foci on assessing and managing the effects of wildfires on stormwater runoff. Third, the Agency had coordinated with the RWQCB and the South Orange County Wastewater Authority (SOCWA) to utilize new technology for tracking their wastewater plume offshore of Doheny Beach during the epidemiology study. The Commission asked that the results of the new technology be presented at their next meeting. The Deputy Director had recently met with the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Task Force for guidance on how funding from a voter-approved sales tax initiative should be spent on water quality improvements. Finally, the NOAA National Marine Protected Area (MPA) Center will hold a workshop at SCCWRP September 16-18 to assess the need for ocean zoning, with over 100 people from the user community participating in mapping current ocean uses.

Dr. Weisberg continued the Executive Director's Report by describing two recent "speed bumps" that have affected SCCWRP. First, SCCWRP received stop work orders for all projects utilizing state funds in August. The State normally provides about 40% of SCCWRP's annual revenue. Work continued as an exception for bond-funded projects and projects where ongoing sampling is critical to the State, such as support of the state's Sediment Quality Objectives (SQOs). However, all other projects with funding from the State, including mapping of shellfish beneficial use areas, were delayed until future notice. Second, a recent lawsuit ruling brought against the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board limited their ability to interact with the Agency on a variety of TMDL-related projects on which we normally have extensive interaction.

The Executive Director noted two administrative items for his report. First, in response to an earlier request from Commissioner Egoscue, he outlined proposed changes to subsequent Agency financial reports that would reduce the dollar amount in the "miscellaneous" category. These included creating a new category for meeting support and transferring non-office supplies (e.g., paper dishware and utensils) to the office supplies category. Personnel functions and smaller items such as vaccines and visa applications for researchers would remain under the miscellaneous category. In closing, the Executive Director congratulated Commissioner Gerry Thibeault surpassing former Commissioner Janet Garber as the longest-running member of the SCCWRP Commission.

## **6. CTAG REPORT**

Gerry McGowen, Chair of the Commissioner's Technical Advisory Committee (CTAG), presented a summary of their August 28th meeting. CTAG representatives received the Director's Report and Bight'08 update from Ken Schiff, Deputy Director. He also indicated that CTAG had discussed SCCWRP's interaction with SFEI. They concluded that Dr. Mike Connor of SFEI would be invited to join future CTAG meetings, but that the organization would not be offered membership on CTAG at this time. The second annual SCCWRP Symposium was also discussed. The date is set for January 20<sup>th</sup> and the invitation process would be similar to the 2007 Symposium. There were three technical presentations; Keith Maruya gave a presentation on PBDE concentrations in southern California biota, Eric Stein gave a presentation on the new SCCWRP web site, and Steve Weisberg gave a presentation on the effects of climate change on the ocean. The next CTAG meeting was scheduled for November 19, 2008.

**7. APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSION CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

SCCWRP's Joint Powers Agreement requires annual election of Commission Chair and Vice-Chair. Commissioner Ghirelli motioned for election of Commissioner Dojiri from the City of Los Angeles as the Chair. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Maguin and approved unanimously. Commissioner Maguin motioned for election of Commissioner Egoscue from the City of Los Angeles as the Vice-Chair. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ghirelli and approved unanimously. Commissioner Polhemus was thanked for his service as Chair.

**8. FUTURE MEETING DATES**

The Commission selected the following meeting dates and a meeting time of 9:30 am for calendar year 2009:

- March 13<sup>th</sup>
- June 12<sup>th</sup>
- September 11<sup>th</sup>
- December 11<sup>th</sup>

Commissioner Maguin motioned to approve the Commission meeting dates. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Polhemus and approved unanimously.

**9. ASSOCIATE COMMISSION MEMBER AGREEMENT**

The Executive Director presented the Associate Commission Member Agreement for Commission consideration. Commissioner Polhemus motioned to approve the Associate Commission Member Agreement. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Maguin and approved unanimously.

**10. CONTRACT APPROVAL**

Within the last few days, the Agency became aware of the need to add a contract (number four below) to the agenda for approval. Upon motion of Commissioner Maguin, seconded by Commissioner Ghirelli, this contract was unanimously approved to be added to the agenda, with Commissioners Polhemus and Hashimoto abstaining.

The Executive Director requested that the Commission approve resolutions regarding the following contracts that have or would be offered to the Authority.

- 1) Gateway Cities Council of Governments JPA (\$1,500,000)  
Atmospheric Deposition

Upon the motion of Commissioner Maguin, seconded by Commissioner Polhemus, the contract was unanimously approved by Resolution, with Commissioner Hashimoto abstaining.

- 2) State Water Resources Control Board (\$525,000)  
Bight'08
- 3) State Water Resources Control Board (\$200,000)  
Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS)
- 4) State Water Resources Control Board (\$5,000,000)  
Source Identification

Upon the motion of Commissioner Langworthy, seconded by Commissioner Maguin, the contracts were unanimously approved by Resolution, with Commissioners Polhemus and Hashimoto abstaining.

As an informational item, Dr. Weisberg described contracts with value of \$250,000 or less that the Authority has accepted or indicated a willingness to accept. While the governing agreement of SCCWRP requires no Commission action on these, the contracts were described to inform and ensure that the direction of the Authority's work is consistent with the desires of the Commission.

- 5) City of Oceanside (\$73,395)  
Bight'08
- 6) San Elijo Joint Powers Authority (\$12,810)  
Bight'08
- 7) Coastal Conservancy (\$152,000)  
Ballona Wetlands Water Quality
- 8) National Marine Fishery Service (\$75,000)  
Seagrass Monitoring
- 9) County of San Diego (\$40,000)  
Rainbow Creek Stream Algae
- 10) City of San Diego (through Weston Solutions) (\$16,371)  
Chemical Analysis
- 11) Alameda County (through Applied Marine Sciences) (\$4,600)  
Workshop Participation
- 12) University of Southern California (\$29,400)  
MERHAB Project
- 13) State Water Resources Control Board (\$75,000)  
Marine Debris Study
- 14) University of California, Santa Cruz (\$10,000)  
MARINE Database
- 15) State Water Resources Control Board (\$20,000)  
Sediment TIE

There were no objections to any of these contracts.

#### **11. BIGHT'08 UPDATE**

Ken Schiff reported on progress of the Bight-wide regional sampling. Overall, planning and implementation had been going well. Working groups were almost finished with summer sampling efforts. Mr. Schiff presented a time chart detailing each working group's schedule for work plan completion, QA exercises, and start of fieldwork, with the current activities

highlighted. He then showed a map of successful sediment grabs, where only a few locations remained to be sampled over the following week. Next steps for the Bight'08 effort included finishing Coastal Ecology sampling, finishing Rocky Reef sampling by the end of the year, preparing for wet weather sampling, and finishing QA exercises for the Shoreline Microbiology component. Dr. Weisberg added that the Agency strives to enlist non-governmental (NGO) participation. One recent example of NGO participation is a partnership with Reef Check that will coordinate with the Rocky Reef group to compare methods by conducting surveys at the same sites.

## **12. SCCWRP WEB SITE**

Dr. Eric Stein presented the new SCCWRP web site for Commission feedback prior to its release. He estimated that the site would go live in about 3 weeks. The justification and major changes for the new website, as well as limitations of the previous website were reviewed. Dr. Stein next displayed the hierarchical organization and navigation features of the new website, explaining how to find projects, related publications and images. CTAG Chair Gerry McGowen offered a summary of CTAG's discussion at their last meeting, noting that they especially liked the new website's easier navigation. CTAG also had requested some minor changes to the home page and asked that the executive summaries of Technical Reports be presented prior to the download of the entire paper. Dr. Weisberg stated that the website would be adjusted in the future as usage statistics became available, and that the Research Areas section would be revised yearly in accordance with the new Research Plan. Commissioner Egoscue suggested that a blog be added to the website to improve its rating on web search engines such as Google. Restriction of access to certain areas of the website was raised, but the general opinion of the Commissioners that there was no need for such restriction. Other requests regarding the navigation ribbons and access to documents were raised by Commissioner Polhemus and noted for revision by Stein and Weisberg.

## **13. CLIMATE CHANGE**

The Executive Director presented an overview on the effects of climate change on the coastal ocean. He began by showing information and data from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and National Academy of Sciences (NAS) on the rise in global temperatures and atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels. Resultant effects on the marine environment included ocean warming and related shifts in species distribution, coral bleaching, melting glaciers and resultant sea level rise, habitat loss such as inundation of coastal wetlands, and changes in ocean circulation. Dr. Weisberg focused the Commission's attention on the rise in atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>, which can result in ocean acidification. Even a small drop in pH has the potential to seriously impair carbonate formation in bivalves and other species. Leading scientists are concerned about this outcome and Dr. Weisberg highlighted recent experiments involving controlled gas aquarium systems, deep sea CO<sub>2</sub> release, and artificial CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration. In relating this information to SCCWRP's member agencies, he observed that the agencies do not generate a large amount of greenhouse gases, but should pay attention to the effects of their ocean outfalls, their role in carbon sequestration, and the potential for a 303(d) listing for ocean acidity. SCCWRP currently has only one project related to climate change effects, which is focused on inundation of coastal wetlands. However, the Executive Director noted that CTAG will be meeting with Agency staff to explore opportunities for mining the long-term historical datasets collected by the member agencies to address effects of climate change on the local ocean.

**14. PBDEs**

Dr. Keith Maruya presented SCCWRP's recent findings about polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDE) concentrations in the Southern California Bight (SCB). He began with background information on PBDEs including their use as flame retardants. The chemical structure of PBDEs is similar to PCBs, meaning that they are persistent, widespread, bioaccumulative and capable of long-range transport. Their increased use from the 1970's to the present day has led to an increase in the levels found in human tissue, particularly in North America where PBDE use is prevalent. NOAA's Mussel Watch Program indicated the highest levels of PBDEs nationwide were found in the SCB. Dr. Maruya described SCCWRP's studies showing that PBDE levels in California Sea Lions from the SCB were the highest levels found in marine mammals worldwide. Although the levels in marine mammals of the SCB varied based on species, age, sex, and foraging habits, little is known about the toxicity of these compounds. Dr. Maruya described potential future studies related to PBDEs including chemical transformations (debromination), sources and pathways for biomagnification, long-term temporal monitoring of levels in the environment, and establishment of credible toxicity thresholds. The Commission discussed a number of issues including what were the pertinent management and regulatory actions, especially without thresholds for evaluating impacts. The Executive Director indicated that even the measurement methods for PBDEs are still developmental and offered SCCWRP's services to member agencies for laboratory training and intercalibration to measure PBDEs.

**15. FUTURE MEETING AGENDA ITEMS**

The Commission requested that the Executive Director make a presentation on the Agency's process for prioritizing research projects. They also asked for a presentation about the effectiveness of gliders for measuring the location of ocean outfall plumes, using SOCWA as a case study.

**16. OTHER BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Commissioner Tesoro announced that John Snyder has been designated to replace Kathleen Flannery as the Alternate Commissioner for the County of San Diego.

**17. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

**18. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 pm until the next Commission meeting on December 12, 2008.

ATTEST:

Bryan Nece  
Secretary