

**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**

**June 12, 2009  
9:30 AM**

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**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Mas Dojiri (Chair) - *City of Los Angeles*  
Tracy Egoscue (Vice-Chair) - *Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board*  
Diego Cadena - *Los Angeles County Department of Public Works*  
Robert Ghirelli - *Orange County Sanitation District*  
Gerhardt Hubner - *Ventura County Watershed Protection District*  
Steve Maguin (until 11:00 AM) - *Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County*  
Darrin Polhemus - *State Water Resources Control Board*  
John Robertus - *San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board*  
Mary Anne Skorpanich - *County of Orange*  
John Kemmerer (for Alexis Strauss) - *US Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX*  
Cid Tesoro - *County of San Diego*  
Gerard Thibeault - *Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board*

**STAFF PRESENT**

Stephen Weisberg - *Executive Director*  
Bryan Nece - *Administrative Officer*  
Wesley Beverlin - *Legal Counsel*  
Ken Schiff - *Deputy Director*  
Steve Bay - *Principal Investigator*  
Peter Miller - *Principal Investigator*  
Shelly Moore - *Information Systems Manager*  
Eric Stein - *Principal Investigator*  
Karen Setty - *Science Writer*  
Carly Alger - *Research Technician*  
Sara Weisberg - *Laboratory Assistant*

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Dominic Gregorio - *State Water Resources Control Board*  
Joe Gully - *Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County*  
Eric Strahan - *Hach Hydrolab*  
Irwin Haydock - *Public*  
George Robertson - *Orange County Sanitation District*  
Chris Crompton - *Orange County Public Works*  
Phil Friess - *Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County*

Commission Chair Dojiri called the meeting to order at 9:31 AM. He recognized John Kemmerer as acting Commissioner for EPA Region IX.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

- 1. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD MARCH 13, 2009**
- 2. QUARTERLY FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED MARCH 31, 2009**
- 3. QUARTERLY STATEMENT OF INVESTMENTS AT MARCH 31, 2009**
- 4. MINUTES OF CTAG MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 26, 2008**

Commission Chair Dojiri offered a few minor edits to the March Commission minutes. With these changes, Commissioner Maguin motioned for approval of consent items, seconded by Commissioner Polhemus, which was unanimously approved.

### **REGULAR AGENDA**

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

The Executive Director began the Director's Report with a financial report, highlighting several values on the quarterly financial statement (agenda item #2). He explained that while income from grants and contracts had been drastically reduced as a result of cuts in the state budget, the difference between SCCWRP's income and expenses was small due to cost-saving measures such as reduced hiring, reduced subcontracting, and reduced capital expenditures. Thus, SCCWRP was still on track with their fiscal plan for the current year.

Beginning his technical report, the Executive Director demonstrated SCCWRP's new remote meeting attendance system, which was refined in collaboration with CTAG. The new system allows the user to see a live view of the conference room and projector screen, access streaming audio, chat, and view a list of the individuals logged in to the system. One user at a time is able to control the zoom and camera angle. Access to the live feed can be made public or restricted. It is also possible to record and create a video of a meeting. He felt the system would be especially useful at this time, as the State and other agencies have been restricting travel.

Weisberg asked whether the Commission would like to use the system to broadcast their meetings via the web. Upon a motion from Commissioner Ghirelli, seconded by Commissioner Tesoro, the Commission approved broadcasting future Commission meetings without password protection as long as the camera angle and zoom are controlled by SCCWRP staff.

Weisberg next updated the Commission regarding SCCWRP's involvement in three recent meetings. First, SCCWRP served as local host for the EPA's National Beaches Conference held in Huntington Beach. EPA also held a separate session of invited top scientists at SCCWRP to receive feedback on EPA's scientific activities to support development of new beach water quality criteria by 2012. Weisberg described a second meeting, which was the Commission's Rapid Methods Task Force, indicating that he would elaborate on that meeting during agenda item #13. Third, he described a workshop on contaminants of emerging concern

(CECs) that involved about 50 scientists and managers and would be reported on under agenda item #12.

Weisberg next distributed a short brief on NOAA's Mussel Watch program, which has traditionally focused on monitoring these sentinel species for legacy contaminants. The program has agreed to restructure and focus on monitoring for CECs, in response to suggestions made by the SCCWRP Commission at one of their earlier meetings. SCCWRP will partner with NOAA for sample collection in southern California. Weisberg stated that he recently attended a congressional hearing of the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans, and Wildlife that was investigating how the federal government could best address CEC issues. Weisberg indicated that he met with several congressional staff following the hearing to describe the SCCWRP's interest in using a restructured Mussel Watch program as one of the investigative tools to provide scientific context for any discussion about CEC issues. He asked for feedback from the Commission about his participation in this type of activity. Several Commissioners indicated that they were supportive of providing information to congressional delegations about topics of interest to the SCCWRP Commission. Commissioner Cadena agreed, but asked that Weisberg be sure to clarify when meeting with congressional staff that he served as a representative of SCCWRP and not necessarily all of the member agencies.

The Executive Director lastly mentioned that SCCWRP has been working in collaboration with USC Sea Grant, where he serves on their scientific advisory panel. He distributed the most recent Sea Grant newsletter, which focused on several projects involving SCCWRP. He also announced that this would be the final Commission meeting for Commissioner Cadena, who was rotating to another position at the LA County Department of Public Works. He would be replaced on the Commission by Mark Pestrella.

## **6. CTAG REPORT**

Dominic Gregorio, Chair of the Commissioner's Technical Advisory Group (CTAG), presented a summary of their meeting on May 28, which was held in conjunction with the Technical Review Committee (TRC) of the San Francisco Estuary Institute's (SFEI's) Regional Monitoring Program (RMP) and several other members of SFEI's staff and the RMP steering committee. The meeting was very productive and began with overview presentations by SCCWRP and SFEI on their respective organizations. The SCCWRP presentation incorporated some regular CTAG business, including the Director's Report and second draft of the Research Plan. CTAG voted to recommend Commission approval of the Research Plan after suggesting a few revisions, such as incorporating the short-term benefits of the DNA barcoding project and adding a new project on standardization for assessing compliance with the Ocean Plan water column monitoring requirements.

In the afternoon, the group received presentations on SCCWRP and SFEI's work within the areas of contaminants of emerging concern and sediment quality assessment. They then discussed potential opportunities for collaboration. The meeting finished with proposed future modes of interaction, including (1) sending SCCWRP's Research Plan to SFEI in February of each year to identify areas of project collaboration, (2) a presentation to CTAG at their November meeting on SFEI's current research interests, and (3) an annual joint meeting in May. In response to a question from Commissioner Dojiri, Gregorio added that the next joint meeting would likely be held in northern California and might be in addition to the formal CTAG meeting.

## **7. FISCAL YEAR 2009/10 RESEARCH PLAN AND BUDGET**

The Executive Director provided copies of the 2009/10 SCCWRP Research Plan for consideration by the Commission. He also gave a presentation on how it was created, including how ideas are developed, how projects are selected, and current points of emphasis. The research planning process is initiated through conversations with member agency representatives via informal meetings with Commissioners and CTAG's November meeting, which SCCWRP uses to identify the member agencies' most pressing issues and associated scientific questions. Weisberg also interacts extensively with other scientists, NGOs, and federal agencies through advisory committees and scientific meetings, in order to identify questions that will likely become relevant in the future.

Five priority research areas were identified, including criteria and thresholds, regional monitoring, new measurement methods, emerging issues, and predictive modeling. Decision criteria for individual projects included consistency with SCCWRP priorities, partnership with member agencies, collaboration with other scientists, likelihood of funding or co-funding, likelihood of project success, and cross- departmental collaboration. Preliminary project proposals are submitted to the Executive Director in January and about 2/3 of these are incorporated into the preliminary Research Plan that goes to CTAG in February. A second version (with about 20% of the document revised) is presented to CTAG again in May for their endorsement. This Plan, usually with relatively minor alterations, then goes to the Commission for approval in June.

Weisberg noted that this has been a difficult year for planning, given financial uncertainties. New points of emphasis in the Research Plan include molecular methods, bio-objectives, and nutrients. Following the presentation, Commissioner Robertus asked about changing plume discharge dynamics as water supply restrictions in southern California lead to an increasing need for recycled water and desalinization. Because salt and pollutants in the discharge load would be more concentrated, current dilution models for the plumes might not be usable. In addition, designation of a beneficial use (recycling) for discharged fresh water might exacerbate this issue. Commissioners Egoscue and Dojiri agreed that this was a relevant concern. Weisberg offered to further discuss this research need with the Commissioners and initiate a midyear project if warranted.

Commissioner Ghirelli motioned for approval of the Research Plan, seconded by Commissioner Robertus. It was approved unanimously.

## **8. RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING RULES GOVERNING COMPENSATION, BENEFITS, AND PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The Commission considered adoption of a Resolution establishing rules governing SCCWRP's compensation, benefits, and personnel policies and procedures, effective July 1, 2009. The Executive Director noted two changes in the Resolution from the previous year: a change in the premium allocation for employees selecting the PPO health plan, and an escalation in the salary schedule upper and lower limits by about 3% to adjust for inflation, affecting employees at the upper end of their salary range. Commissioner Maguin indicated that the Commission's Personnel and Finance Committee had met on this topic and recommended the Commission adopt the change to the health plan contribution amount but not make the adjustment to the salary schedule until authorization of raises in salary was also being considered. Commissioner Egoscue noted that this finding of the Personnel and Finance Committee was not the result of poor staff performance, but rather a reflection of the economic times. Commissioner Maguin

motioned to approve the Resolution without adjustment of the salary schedule, which was seconded by Commissioner Thibeault and unanimously approved.

## **9. EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

The Commission considered approval of an employment contract for the Executive Director, effective July 1, 2009. The terms of the contract were identical to Weisberg's previous contract approved four years prior and contained no salary increase for the present year. Commissioner Maguin, speaking for the Personnel and Finance Committee, commended Weisberg for not requesting a salary increase at the present time and stated that the Committee supported the proposed contract. Commissioner Dojiri offered a few typographical and consistency corrections, which will be addressed by SCCWRP's Administrative Officer, Bryan Nece. With these changes, Commissioner Maguin motioned to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner Thibeault, and it was unanimously approved.

## **10. CONTRACT APPROVAL**

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

- 1) US EPA Region 9 (\$290,000)  
Biological Objectives for Riverine Wetlands
- 2) California Resources Agency (\$255,000)  
Status and Trends Assessment of Wetland Extent
- 3) California Department of Health Services (\$110,000)  
Beach Watch

Upon the motion of Commissioner Egoscue, seconded by Commissioner Polhemus, the above contracts were unanimously approved by Resolution, with Acting Commissioner Kemmerer abstaining.

- 4) State Water Resources Control Board (\$860,000)  
Mapping Wetland and Riparian Habitats in Southern California Coastal Watersheds
- 5) State Water Resources Control Board (989,000)  
Creating Tools for Numeric Nutrient Criteria and TMDL Development in San Diego Coastal Lagoons

Upon the motion of Commissioner Egoscue, seconded by Commissioner Thibeault, the above contracts were unanimously approved by Resolution, with Commissioner Polhemus and Acting Commissioner Kemmerer abstaining.

As an informational item, 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.

- 6) South Orange County Wastewater Authority (SEP through Santa Diego Regional Board) (\$109,500)  
Bight'08 Rocky Reef Study
- 7) Moss Landing Marine Laboratory/San Jose State (\$25,000)  
SWAMP Special Studies
- 8) City of San Diego (through Weston) (\$21,000)  
Data Analysis
- 9) U.S. Navy (through NOREAS, Inc.) (\$150,000)  
Toxaphene Analysis
- 10) Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (\$17,500)  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (\$47,980)  
CRAM Training

There were no objections to any of these contracts.

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

Deputy Director Ken Schiff gave a presentation on progress of the 2008 Southern California Bight Regional Monitoring Program. The program was larger than in the past, with a multi-year phased implementation approach that was working well. Schiff showed the six elements of the study and progress made to date in each area. Two of the elements (offshore water quality and shoreline microbiology) had delayed some data collection for one year as a result of the State funding freeze. The Bight program had inspired some new activities, including cooperation between Mexico and the US on coastal ecology monitoring, integration of stormwater agencies' nutrient data, and adoption of the ASBS monitoring model on a statewide level. Some upcoming activities for the workgroups were: preparing the first of four coastal ecology reports this summer, interacting with the State's Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) on examination of contaminant bioaccumulation in sportfish, training local laboratories in new microbiological methods, and initiating a pilot study on source tracking.

Schiff responded to questions from the Commission. In response to inquiry about the sportfish bioaccumulation research, Schiff noted that sampling locations had been divided into zones so as to relate the data back to sediment quality. He added that this type of survey has not been undertaken in about 20 years. The frequency of future sampling efforts will likely depend on the bioaccumulation levels found.

## **12. EMERGING CONTAMINANTS**

The Executive Director gave a presentation on contaminants of emerging concern (CECs). He indicated that while there are many potential CECs, there are few standardized measurement methods and only limited evidence of reproductive effects in wildlife. He communicated that the Commission should be concerned about this issue, but not alarmed. A variety of CECs are regularly found in POTW effluent, but population-level effects have not yet been detected in southern California fish. Weisberg next discussed SCCWRP activities for further assessing CECs.

The first activity was a workshop that SCCWRP held to enhance dialog between scientists and managers, intended to translate current knowledge into strategies for addressing CECs in

ambient and drinking water. The workshop was co-sponsored by the National Water Research Institute, the Urban Water Research Center, the San Francisco Estuary Institute and the California Ocean Science Trust. Highlights of the workshop findings were that the current risk assessment process does not work well for CECs because there are too many new chemicals to use an approach based on assessing single chemicals one at a time. There was a need for a prioritization process to determine: 1) which chemicals are most appropriate for incorporation into monitoring programs and 2) which chemicals have highest priority for toxicological testing. Three approaches were recommended for prioritization: a) chemical risk assessment, b) fate and effects modeling of chemical groups, and c) regional monitoring as a screening mechanism. The use of regional monitoring programs was a focal point of discussion at the workshop; the results of chemical and biological assessments could be used to prioritize the need for toxicity testing for those constituents found pervasively in the environment. Data should be interpreted by a tiered approach, classifying chemicals for no monitoring, low-level monitoring, risk assessment, or source identification and mitigation.

The workshop participants also recommended starting out with existing lists of compounds that have a regional presence, and then shortening or expanding the list iteratively. They maintained that there would be no single list of chemicals, but rather separate lists for different geographies and different beneficial uses of the water body. Enhanced use of biological screening was also recommended. Other important points were that scientists and managers are currently at the exploratory/screening stage rather than the regulatory stage, and that a communication strategy to maintain public confidence was imperative. Alternate Commissioner Friess added that David Sedlak of UC Berkeley had also presented a model for determining the risk of adverse effects, which Weisberg said would be shown in the workshop report. Commissioner Polhemus asked whether there was specific discussion of a time frame for implementing the workshop recommendations, to which Weisberg responded that a time frame was not established, but SCCWRP was already following up on research needs and potential collaborations identified at the workshop.

The second activity Weisberg described was the Recycled Water Emerging Contaminant Blue Ribbon Task Force that SCCWRP is facilitating for the State Water Resources Control Board. He indicated that the State Board had recently developed a recycled water policy, but had delayed recommendations until they could receive input from the expert panel. Six experts have now been selected by SCCWRP, with input from a stakeholder advisory committee, and the panel will meet for the first time September 30 - October 2. They would address five key questions about how the State should approach regulation of CECs. A draft report will be prepared in February 2010 and the panel will respond to public comment in April. The final report will then be available by May 2010. Weisberg asked the Commission to share any recommendations for people who they feel would be appropriate speakers to frame the issue for the panel at the first meeting.

When asked about how CECs will affect future Bight Regional Monitoring Programs, Weisberg responded that CEC studies may be incorporated as special study components, given general interest and availability of funding. Commissioners Polhemus and Thibeault added that regular Bight monitoring activities shouldn't be sacrificed to study CECs, but regulators may want to begin studying those CECs found ubiquitously at high concentrations.

### **13. RAPID MICROBIOLOGICAL METHODS TASK FORCE**

The Executive Director gave a presentation regarding the Commission's Rapid Methods Task Force. As background, the Commission decided at their March meeting to form a task force to

help them determine the most appropriate steps toward implementing rapid microbiological beach monitoring methods. Weisberg described the Task Force members the Commission had agreed upon and presented the agenda from the group's first meeting on May 27. The meeting focused on the technical studies that SCCWRP will conduct this fall and developing a rollout strategy. The Task Force recommended three technical conditions for the new methods to be rolled out: correlation with existing methods, a relationship to health risk, and having any loss in correlation with health risk (as compared to traditional methods) compensated for by earlier warning. The rollout strategy involved applying of the methods at high use beaches in Orange County redundantly with traditional methods. Much of the Task Force's discussion focused on whether same-day warnings were feasible, and how to speed up the testing and posting process. Suggested methods included earlier sampling, priority processing, automated signs, internet warnings, and (over the long term) the development of mobile laboratories. The Task Force will meet next in November to review the results of technical studies. They plan to meet again in February to determine whether a rollout is justified, and will present recommendations to the Commission at their March meeting. The Commissioners requested an update at their December meeting as well.

#### **14. FUTURE MEETING AGENDA ITEMS**

The Commission identified two items for future meetings. The first was an update on progress of the Rapid Methods Task Force. The second was a presentation by SCCWRP's auditors at the December meeting.

#### **15. OTHER BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Commissioner Ghirelli thanked Jim Allen, who recently retired from SCCWRP, for his service. He also recommended that SCCWRP consider actions it could take to support the Southern California Coastal Ocean Observing System (SCCOOS) which was threatened by loss of funding. Potential actions included adopting a Commission resolution and writing a letter of support. The Executive Director responded that he was on the Governing Board of SCCOOS, shared the concern about SCCOOS funding and would ask at the next Governing Board meeting what actions SCCWRP could take to assist. The Commissioners thanked Commissioner Cadena for his service and wished him luck in future endeavors.

#### **16. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

#### **17. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:11 PM, until the next Commission meeting on September 2, 2009.

ATTEST:

Bryan Nece  
Secretary