

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

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

**September 7, 2012
9:30 AM**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

David Barker - *San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Kurt Berchtold (Vice-Chair) - *Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Diego Cadena - *Los Angeles County Department of Public Works*
Grace Chan - *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*
Chris Crompton - *County of Orange*
Mas Dojiri - *City of Los Angeles*
Robert Ghirelli - *Orange County Sanitation District*
Janet Hashimoto - *US Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX*
Gerhardt Hubner - *Ventura County Watershed Protection District*
Catherine Kuhlman - *Ocean Protection Council*
Steve Meyer (Chair) - *City of San Diego*
Darrin Polhemus - *State Water Resources Control Board*
Sam Unger - *Los Angeles 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*
John Griffith - *Principal Investigator*
Keith Maruya - *Principal Investigator*
Martha Sutula - *Principal Investigator*
Eric Stein - *Principal Investigator*
Steve Steinberg - *Principal Investigator*

OTHERS PRESENT

Chris Beegan - *State Water Resources Control Board*
Phil Friess - *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*
Joe Gully - *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*
Dr. Charles Hagedorn - *Visiting Senior Scientist*
Bruce Posthumus - *San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Deborah Smith - *Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Tim Stebbins - *City of San Diego*

Commission Chair Meyer called the meeting to order at 9:32 AM.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. Minutes of Meeting Held June 1, 2012**
- 2. Quarterly Financial Statement for the Period Ended June 30, 2012**
- 3. Quarterly Statement of Investments at June 30, 2012**
- 4. Minutes of CTAG Meeting Held April 23 and May 10, 2012**

Commissioner Ghirelli motioned to approve the consent items. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dojiri and unanimously approved with Commissioner Hashimoto and Crompton abstaining.

REGULAR AGENDA

Commissioner Cadena arrived at 9:42 AM.

Commissioner Hubner arrived at 9:46 AM.

5. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Weisberg began his report by describing how SCCWRP's research focus on molecular technologies was gaining recognition both nationally and abroad. He indicated that he was asked to be a plenary speaker at the Genomics Standards Consortium in Oxford England Europe to describe SCCWRP's accomplishments in this area. He also indicated that construction of SCCWRP's new molecular laboratory was nearly complete and would facilitate additional research opportunities. Weisberg offered to give interested Commission members a tour of the new lab at the conclusion of the meeting.

Weisberg next provided an update on how he was responding to the Commission's request for SCCWRP to stay involved in ocean acidification (OA) issues. Weisberg recently served as facilitator for a successful NOAA-sponsored meeting in Seattle, Washington that involved 23 countries developing a common approach to monitoring OA, in response to a recommendation for such coordination from the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainability. Weisberg also participated in a meeting of the California Current Acidification Network (C-CAN) at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography which sought to develop consistency in monitoring parameters and quality assurance for this West Coast OA monitoring alliance. Weisberg next reminded the Commission that the Washington State Ocean Acidification Blue Ribbon Panel would be producing a report in November recommending management actions in response to the shellfish survival issues that the SCCWRP Commission had been briefed on earlier. Weisberg volunteered to brief the Commission on the Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations at the next Commission meeting.

Weisberg indicated that many SCCWRP staff members are currently involved in monitoring the Orange County Sanitation District (OCSD) marine outfall diversion, which represented a

rare opportunity for studying effects of treated wastewater discharge to an area that typically does not receive it.

Weisberg next indicated that SCCWRP was receiving a "Partners in Conservation" award from the Department of the Interior for the agency's participation in the Multi-Agency Rocky Intertidal Network (MARINE).

Weisberg finished by asking the Commission about the dashboard document that provides a project budget and schedule status each quarter. Weisberg indicated that it was difficult to produce because the SCCWRP Research Plan is organized around umbrella research areas rather than individual contracts with specific budgets and deadlines. As such, the dashboard provides an overall feel for project area success, but does not provide a quantitative measure. Commissioners Meyer and Ghirelli responded it was still valuable to have something to look at on one page and asked that the agency continue to produce it.

6. CTAG Report

Tim Stebbins gave an update on CTAG's August 9 meeting. The first draft of a fact sheet on harmful algal blooms will undergo additional refinement and be reviewed a second time by CTAG before the Commission receives it. CTAG selected January 24 as the 2013 SCCWRP Symposium date. CTAG continues to spend time revising their technical review process. CTAG has also experimented with a new process for rating individual projects in the Research Plan, though the first implementation of that exercise identified some problems with the scoring system and substantial differences in rating among member agencies. Stebbins has formed a subcommittee to develop recommendations for how to improve that process.

CTAG did some planning for the 2013 Bight Regional Monitoring Program (Bight '13) kickoff meeting on September 24. In response to a question about the Bight '13 Microbiology component, Stebbins indicated a breakout group at the kickoff meeting will discuss the monitoring component's future directions. Joe Gully added there is interest in doing a region-wide assessment of rapid microbiological monitoring methods.

Finally, Stebbins indicated that CTAG reviewed the joint CTAG-SCCWRP thematic document on the Clean Water Act. CTAG members felt comfortable with its condition and recommended it, along with the contracts, for Commission approval.

7. Contract Review

The Executive Director requested the Commission approve a resolution regarding three contracts that have been offered to the Authority.

- 1) State Water Resources Control Board (\$957,019)
Numeric Flow Criteria to Support Freshwater Bio-Objectives
- 2) State Water Resources Control Board (\$1,000,000)
Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS)

- 3) State Water Resources Control Board (\$250,000)
Stressor Identification for Sediment Toxicity

Commissioner Ghirelli motioned to approve the three contracts, and was seconded by Commissioner Dojiri. The motion was unanimously approved with Commissioner Polhemus and Hashimoto abstaining.

As an informational item, the Executive Director presented contracts with a value of \$250,000 or less that the Authority has accepted or indicated a willingness to accept. While SCCWRP's governing agreement requires no Commission action on these, they were presented to ensure the Authority's directions are consistent with the Commission's intentions.

- 4) NOAA (through the Tijuana National Estuary Research Reserve) (\$200,000)
Science Collaborative Grant
- 5) State Water Resources Control Board (\$73,000)
Beach Watch
- 6) County of Orange (through Tetra Tech (\$49,500)
San Diego Reference Stream Study
- 7) National Science Foundation (through UC Irvine) (\$200,000)
Terrestrial Watershed Modeling
- 8) San Francisco Estuary Institute (\$35,000)
Workshop on Causes of Persistent Moderate Sediment Toxicity in San Francisco Bay
- 9) San Francisco Estuary Institute (through University of Florida) (\$56,000)
Linkage of In Vitro Assay Results With In Vivo End Points

There were no objections to any of these contracts.

8. Election of Commission Chair and Vice-Chair

Weisberg explained the Commission Chair and Vice-Chair nominally serve one year terms, but traditionally have been renewed for a second year and that this was the first year that both the present Chair and Vice Chair had served. Commission Chair Meyer then requested nominations for the position of Chair over the next year. Commissioner Chan nominated Commissioner Meyer as Chair, which was seconded by Commissioner Dojiri. The nomination was unanimously approved with Commissioner Hashimoto abstaining.

Commissioner Meyer next requested nominations for the position of Vice-Chair. Commissioner Unger nominated Commissioner Berchtold as Vice-Chair, which was seconded by Commissioner Ghirelli. The nomination was unanimously approved with Commissioner Hashimoto abstaining.

Commissioner Meyer announced Commissioner Chan had been re-elected as Chair of the Commission's Personnel and Finance Committee for the next year at the Committee's meeting earlier that morning. Commissioner Meyer also asked any Associate Member agencies with interest in serving on the Personnel and Finance Committee, which typically meets one hour before the regular Commission meetings, to email him.

9. Future Meeting Dates

The following dates were proposed for the 2013 Commission meetings:

- March 8
- June 7
- September 6
- December 6

No Commissioners expressed conflicts with this proposed schedule. Commissioner Dojiri motioned to approve these dates, which was seconded by Commissioner Chan. They were adopted unanimously with Commissioner Hashimoto abstaining.

10. Clean Water Act Assessment Document Review

Weisberg presented a near-final draft of the thematic document to assess the effectiveness of the Clean Water Act in improving the condition of the southern California coastal ocean developed cooperatively by member agencies and SCCWRP staff. He requested comments from the Commission and indicated that he would be asking for their approval to release the document. Commissioners praised the document and recommended a few minor edits along with a few formatting suggestions. Weisberg encouraged the Commissioners to send the small specific edits to Karen Setty by email. In response to a question about why the perspectives pieces no longer included an industrial perspective, Weisberg explained that upper management of the company asked had not yet approved their contribution and would only be included if that approval occurred soon. Commissioner Unger raised discussion on the paragraph titled "The Low-Hanging Fruit Has Been Harvested" in the cost chapter, with concerns about speculating future costs and insinuating that remaining problems are not worth pursuing. An agreement was reached to rewrite the paragraph for Commissioner Unger's review. Commissioner Polhemus raised concern about not having a 1:1 relationship between the cost examples in Table 1 and suggested splitting it into two tables. He also indicated the Executive Summary failed to draw in the reader and felt dry. Weisberg agreed to work on this section and provide a revised version to Commissioner Polhemus for review.

Commissioner Ghirelli suggested SCCWRP issue a press release announcing the document and the other Commissioners agreed. Commissioner Dojiri offered the assistance of the City of LA's press office in drafting the release and Weisberg agreed to send a draft press release to all Commissioners for review and subsequent distribution through their press relations staff if they desired.

Commissioner Polhemus motioned to approve release of the Clean Water Act document with the suggested revisions. Commissioner Kuhlman seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved with Commissioner Hashimoto abstaining. Weisberg thanked

the Commission for their assistance in refining the document, but indicated that the real success of the document would be judged by how much the Commissioners used it, as the target audience for the document was their Boards and Directors. Commissioner Kuhlman responded that she liked it enough that she would be requesting a presentation on the topic at the November Ocean Protection Council meeting. Weisberg encouraged other Commissioners to call upon the SCCWRP staff to provide similar presentations to their Boards.

11. Marine Debris

Shelly Moore presented information on SCCWRP's marine debris monitoring program. SCCWRP's 1998 groundbreaking study found pre-production plastic pellets to be a common type of beach debris, which led to additional research and management actions. SCCWRP recently conducted a follow-up study that surveyed 60 open coastal beaches throughout the state for pellets and other types of debris. The results are not yet final but the study will examine correlation with source contributions and seasonality. There is interest in performing additional debris research in Bight '13, with the California Coastkeeper organizations and the Southern California Stormwater Monitoring Coalition expressing particular interest. In response to a Commissioner question about how pellets are released into the environment, Moore explained they are often lost through transport (e.g., by ship or rail). Some are also tied to historic sources as the pellets decrease in size due to weathering but do not entirely break down.

12. CEC Ecosystem Panel Report

Keith Maruya presented findings from the State's expert panel on contaminants of emerging concern (CECs) in surface waters, which SCCWRP convened. A wide variety of CECs are found in wastewater as well as stormwater and the panel considered which contaminants should be prioritized for monitoring. Maruya presented the list of contaminants recommended for ambient water monitoring in the aqueous phase, sediments, and biological tissue. Maruya also highlighted the panel's other main recommendation which is move away from monitoring individual contaminants, which are too numerous to effectively monitor, toward use of develop bioanalytical screening tools that are more integrative of potential effects from all CECs. Weisberg added that development and evaluation of these new bioanalytical screening tools has become one of SCCWRP's research foci.

13. Future Meeting Agenda Items

Commissioner Meyer requested a presentation from the Personnel and Finance Committee on the SCCWRP's investment policy and the Executive Director's annual performance review. Commissioner Ghirelli requested an update on Bight '13, and Commissioner Unger requested an update on SCCWRP's hydromodification studies. Commissioner Polhemus asked for recommendations about what should be done to capture and store monitoring data from the last 40 years, which had proven valuable during production of the Clean Water Act document. Weisberg indicated that CTAG had discussed this during production of the document, as most of this historical data resided with the member agencies rather than with SCCWRP. Stebbins agreed to revisit this at the next CTAG meeting and make a presentation about potential strategies at the next Commission meeting. Lastly,

Commissioner Barker asked for an update on the California Environmental Exchange Network (CEDEN).

14. Other Business and Communications

Commissioner Hashimoto mentioned former Commissioner Alexis Strauss had been promoted to Deputy Regional Administrator for EPA Region 9. Commissioner Meyer asked the signatories and associate members for a status update on executing their JPA agreements effective July 1, 2013. One was already approved, and the others were in progress with no problems foreseen.

15. Public Comments

Joe Gully encouraged participation in the upcoming Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) annual meeting on November 11-15 in Long Beach. Sessions were posted on the meeting website, and half-price registration was being offered for government employees.

16. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 PM until the next Commission meeting on December 7, 2012.

Attest:

Bryan Nece
Secretary