

**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. Suite 110, Costa Mesa, California 92626**

**December 2, 2016
9:30 AM**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Karen Larsen — *State Water Resources Control Board*
Jennifer Phillips (Vice-Chair) — *California Ocean Protection Council*
Deborah Smith — *Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Kurt Berchtold — *Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board*
David Barker — *San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Mas Dojiri — *City of Los Angeles*
Robert Ferrante (Chair) — *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*
Bob Ghirelli — *Orange County Sanitation District*
Peter Vroom — *City of San Diego*
Arne Anselm — *Ventura County Watershed Protection District*
Gary Hildebrand — *Los Angeles County Department of Public Works*
Amanda Carr — *County of Orange*
Todd Snyder — *County of San Diego*

STAFF PRESENT

Stephen Weisberg — *Executive Director*
Bryan Nece — *Administrative Officer*
Wes Beverlin — *Legal Counsel*
Ken Schiff — *Deputy Director*
Steve Bay — *Principal Scientist*
John Griffith — *Principal Scientist*
Eric Stein — *Principal Scientist*
Steve Steinberg — *Principal Scientist*
Martha Sutula — *Principal Scientist*
Scott Martindale — *Editor*

OTHERS PRESENT

Jeff Armstrong — *Orange County Sanitation District*
Chris Crompton — *County of Orange*
Phil Friess — *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*
Joe Gully (CTAG Past Chair) — *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*
Phil Markle — *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*

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

1. Minutes of Meeting Held September 9, 2016

Commissioner Hildebrand motioned to approve Consent Item 1, and Commissioner Carr seconded the motion. The Commission approved the motion unanimously.

2. Quarterly Financial Statement for the Period Ended September 30, 2016

3. Quarterly Statement of Investments at September 30, 2016

4. Minutes of CTAG Meetings Held November 3, 2016

Commissioner Dojiri motioned to approve Consent Items 2-4, and Commissioner Carr seconded the motion. The Commission approved the motion unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA

5. Personnel and Finance Committee Report

Commissioner Ghirelli reported that SCCWRP received their 2016 financial audit, completely free of exceptions for the 16th year in a row. Ghirelli thanked staff and noted that this accomplishment was unprecedented. Ghirelli said SCCWRP's finances were on track as of the first quarter. Ghirelli reported that the Personnel and Finance Committee looked into whether the agency could achieve additional cost savings by sharing administrative services with its member agencies and concluded there would not be significant cost savings, though he did commend the organization for relying on the Orange County Sanitation District for human resources assistance.

Ghirelli reported that the Committee was about to assist the Commission Chair in conducting Executive Director Weisberg's annual performance review and in developing his contract extension. The contract will be drafted and presented to the Commission for consideration at its March 2017 meeting.

Ghirelli said that the Personnel and Finance Committee will prepare minutes for its meetings going forward, beginning with the meeting held earlier that day.

6. 2016 Financial Audit

Commissioner Ghirelli motioned to approve the 2016 Financial Audit, and Commissioner Dojiri seconded the motion. The Commission approved the motion unanimously.

7. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Weisberg welcomed Arne Anselm, the newest SCCWRP Commissioner. Anselm had recently been promoted to Deputy Director for Water Resources at the Ventura County Watershed Protection District and will continue to serve as CTAG representative until his replacement is named.

Weisberg provided an update on a two-day workshop in October at Stanford University focused on developing water-quality goals for West Coast ocean acidification (OA). About 25 scientists and water-quality managers from diverse sectors came together to identify

the next steps, and the research needs, to support identification of indicators/thresholds that can be used as management targets. The Commission requested that Weisberg share the written report from the workshop when it is published later in December.

Weisberg shared examples of recent SCCWRP efforts to build and strengthen partnerships: (1) A Biological Condition Gradient (BCG) expert panel of stream ecologists from across the nation met at SCCWRP in December to develop consensus around the interpretation of California stream bioassessment scores; (2) SCCWRP and the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority are strengthening a partnership that will likely lead to new research collaborations; (3) SCCWRP is exploring opportunities for enhanced interactions with the California Association of Sanitation Agencies, and; (4) SCCWRP is hosting and facilitating the one-year follow-up review of the California Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program by an expert review panel that has been guiding a restructuring of the accrediting body.

Weisberg announced that the 2017 SCCWRP Symposium will be held March 1. This biennial event was originally requested by the Commission as a way for SCCWRP staff to interact with member agency staff and has been incredibly successful.

8. CTAG Report

Past Chair Joe Gully began the CTAG Report by describing a subcommittee formed to determine the relative merits and costs of capturing historical monitoring data in digital form. A presentation to the Commission on historical monitoring data will be ready at their March meeting.

Gully described CTAG's revisit of the long-term research planning effort for Sediment Quality, which was the first of SCCWRP's nine thematic research areas to be revisited since the thematic research planning process was adopted. CTAG concluded that SCCWRP has made significant progress in this theme area in the 2.5 years since the initial research planning workshop, and that the research priorities of SCCWRP and CTAG on this topic remain in strong alignment.

CTAG recommended Commission approval of Contract 1. Contracts 2-8 were not available in time for CTAG review.

Gully noted that this would be his last meeting making presentations to the Commission as he was rotating off of the CTAG Executive Committee. Weisberg commended Gully for his extensive effort on CTAG and for being the driving force behind the improved SCCWRP research planning process.

9. 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 contracts:

- 1) Ocean Protection Council (\$400,000)
Ocean Acidification
- 2) State Water Resources Control Board (\$300,000)
Biological Responses of Fish in Urban Rivers

Commissioner Dojiri motioned to approve the two contracts requiring Commission approval, and Commissioner Berchtold seconded the motion. The Commission approved the motion unanimously, with Commissioners Larsen and Phillips 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.

- 3) County of Orange (\$30,000)
County of Los Angeles (\$30,000)
County of San Diego (\$30,000)
County of Riverside (\$30,000)
County of San Bernardino (\$16,273)
County of Ventura (\$30,000)
City of San Diego (\$30,000)
City of Los Angeles (\$30,000)
City of Long Beach (\$15,000)
Caltrans (\$16,273)
SMC 2016-2017 Regional Monitoring Technical Support
- 4) EPA (through Stream Mechanics) (On-call)
Stream Assessment
- 5) Council for Watershed Health (\$16,000)
Laboratory Analyses
- 6) San Francisco Estuary Institute (\$5,000)
Ocean Acidification Workshop
- 7) County of San Diego (through Brown Caldwell) (\$16,600)
Wet Weather Source Tracking
- 8) County of San Diego (\$150,000)
Wet Weather Source Tracking

The Commission did not raise any objections to the contracts.

10. Alternative Compliance

Deputy Director Ken Schiff presented an informational item on alternative compliance, the next evolution of stormwater management regulations. Schiff explained that alternative compliance, through coordinated watershed management planning to implement best management practices (BMPs), is being used for long-term stormwater NPDES permit compliance. However, it appears that different regional boards and county permittees are using alternative compliance in different ways. Schiff outlined the similarities and differences of the multiple approaches, with a focus on both technical and non-technical implementation needs.

Commissioner Gary Hildebrand discussed the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works successful approach to alternative compliance, including regionally-based BMPs public easements. Commissioner Mas Dojiri echoed Hildebrand's comments, noting that getting creative about BMP installation can provide multiple benefits. Commissioner Amanda Carr agreed, but noted some significant challenges to BMP installation, particularly in urban retrofit areas.

Schiff described SCCWRP's long-term research planning. Moving into the future, SCCWRP has three research directions for supporting alternative compliance: (1) SCCWRP can update the existing 15-year-old stormwater runoff computer models to increase confidence of alternative compliance watershed planning, including pollutant trading/credit frameworks; (2) SCCWRP can evaluate the performance of BMPs, including exploring new technology and maintenance requirements, and; (3) SCCWRP can analyze the effectiveness of BMPs to achieve water-quality and beneficial-use goals.

Commissioner Carr commented that BMP strategy for land development and receiving waters tends to be interrelated. Commissioner Todd Snyder commented that alternative compliance offers a way to gradually come into compliance with federal water-quality standards, instead of immediately becoming responsible for meeting all standards.

Executive Director Weisberg said SCCWRP was looking forward to renewing its focus on stormwater-specific research and will be hiring a full-time stormwater BMP researcher.

11. Trash Policy

Commissioner Karen Larsen gave a presentation on the State Water Board's new trash amendments that are designed to reduce trash loading from high trash-generating areas across the state. The trash amendments are modeled after the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board's trash TMDLs, and call for achieving compliance in one of two ways: (1) installation of full-capture systems, or; (2) development of a trash reduction plan equivalent to full-capture systems. The State Water Board is working with regional boards to implement the amendments, which call for coming into compliance over a 10- to 15-year period. The trash amendments will necessitate research aimed at improving the ability to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of trash-reduction strategies statewide.

Commissioner Deborah Smith commented that a priority for regulators is understanding the lifecycle of the trash-reduction devices and their long-term effectiveness. Commissioner Carr commented that some municipalities will struggle with compliance, as full-capture

devices cannot be feasibly installed everywhere because of flooding risk. Commissioner Hildebrand said Los Angeles County Public Works has selected installation of full-capture devices for all county unincorporated areas, and is still learning about what works best and fine-tuning its maintenance strategies. He was glad to share this information with the other Commissioners.

12. Sediment Quality Assessment

Principal Scientist Steve Bay presented an overview of SCCWRP's sediment quality assessment. Bay explained that the State Water Board adopted a Sediment Quality Objective (SQO) in 2009 for the protection of benthic aquatic life in California embayments that was based, in large part, on an assessment framework developed by SCCWRP. SCCWRP has since developed a sediment assessment framework to support protection of human health in California embayments. This framework, which already is being incorporated into local Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), will serve as the scientific foundation for a proposed human health SQO that the State Water Board will consider adopting in 2017.

Commissioner Deborah Smith noted that while the SQOs are not yet explicitly referenced in 303(d) listings, they already are being referenced in water quality control plans. Asked by Commissioner Carr about the state of stressor identification science. Bay replied that Southern California remains at the leading edge of this science, but that stressor identification is still a challenge, particularly at locations where only modest levels of impairment exist. SCCWRP is continuing to pursue next-generation stressor identification technologies such as molecular methods, and utilizing passive sampling devices to measure the bioavailability of sediment contaminants.

13. Future Meeting Agenda Items

Two items identified earlier in the day were noted: a) A presentation from CTAG about historical data, and b) Weisberg's contract. Weisberg said that each Commission meeting typically includes one or two presentations that focus on in-depth topics of management interest, plus at least one presentation focused on SCCWRP research. Commission Chair Ferrante asked fellow Commissioners to submit ideas for future meeting agenda items over the next year. He asked Weisberg to develop a poll that allows Commissioners to vote for their priority topics.

14. Other Business and Communications

None.

15. Public Comments

No public comments were raised.

16. Adjournment

Commission Chair Ferrante adjourned the meeting at 11:45 AM until the next Commission meeting on March 3, 2017.

Attest:

Bryan Nece
Secretary