

**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**

**June 21, 2019
9:00 AM**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Diane Fleck— *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9*
Karen Mogus — *State Water Resources Control Board*
Justine Kimball (Chair) — *California Ocean Protection Council*
Renee Purdy — *Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Hope Smythe — *Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board*
David Barker — *San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Hassan Rad — *City of Los Angeles*
Robert Ferrante — *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*
James Herberg — *Orange County Sanitation District*
Peter Vroom — *City of San Diego*
Arne Anselm — *Ventura County Watershed Protection District*
Daniel Lafferty — *Los Angeles County Department of Public Works*
Grant Sharp — *County of Orange*
Jo Anne Weber — *County of San Diego*

STAFF PRESENT

Stephen Weisberg — *Executive Director*
Bryan Nece — *Administrative Officer*
Wes Beverlin — *Legal Counsel*
Ken Schiff — *Deputy Director*
Steve Bay — *Department Head*
Eric Stein — *Department Head*
Martha Sutula — *Department Head*
Rachel Diner — *Scientist*
Scott Martindale — *Communications Coordinator*
Karen McLaughlin — *Senior Scientist*
Alvina Mehinto — *Principal Scientist*
Shelly Moore — *Senior Scientist*
Jayme Smith — *Scientist*
Kristine Taniguchi-Quan — *Scientist*

OTHERS PRESENT

Lisa Haney — *Orange County Sanitation District*
Jill Harris — *Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Grace Hyde — *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*
Chad Loften — *Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Phil Markle — *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*

Nikos Melitos — *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*
George Robertson — *Orange County Sanitation District*
Lan Wiborg — *Orange County Sanitation District*
Keith Yaeger — *Regional Water Quality Control Board*

Commission Chair Justine Kimball called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Minutes of Meetings Held March 8, 2019

2. Quarterly Financial Statement for the Period Ended March 31, 2019

3. Quarterly Statement of Investments at March 31, 2019

4. Minutes of CTAG Meetings Held May 23, 2019

Commissioner Smythe motioned to approve Consent Items 1-4 with minor corrections to the minutes requested by Commissioner Mogus, and Commissioner Ferrante seconded the motion. The Commission approved the motion unanimously with Commissioners Mogus and Fleck abstaining.

REGULAR AGENDA

5. Personnel and Finance Committee Report

Commissioner Vroom, Chair of the Personnel and Finance Committee, reported that SCCWRP remains in strong financial health with adequate cash reserves. He indicated that the Personnel and Finance Committee was briefed on SCCWRP's plans for building improvements and capital equipment purchases. SCCWRP staff are proposing changes in a few job titles but no new positions, increasing its relocation allowance and creating a flexible health spending account as part of the Salary Resolution. The Salary Resolution will come before the Commission on today's agenda, which the Personnel and Finance Committee endorses. He indicated that the Personnel and Finance Committee also reviewed planning for SCCWRP's 50th Anniversary event.

6. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Weisberg announced the impending departure of two Commissioners Deborah Halberstadt from the California Ocean Protection Council and Grace Hyde of the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts. He also welcomed four newly appointed Commissioners: Justine Kimball, Alternate Commissioner from the California Ocean Protection Council; Lan Wiborg, Alternate Commissioner from the Orange County Sanitation District; Daniel Lafferty, Commissioner from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works; Renee Purdy, who was elevating from Alternate to Commissioner for the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board with her recent promotion to Executive Officer. In addition, Dr. Weisberg introduced four people who were serving as one-time replacement Commissioners for this meeting: Diane Fleck from the U.S. Environmental

Protection Agency, Region 9; Grant Sharp from the County of Orange; Hassan Rad from the City of Los Angeles and JoAnn Weber from the County of San Diego.

The Executive Director also announced two staff changes. Keith Maruya, who heads SCCWRP's Chemistry Department, will retire on August 31, and Charles Wong will be his replacement. He also indicated that Steve Bay, head of SCCWRP's Toxicology Department, recently announced his retirement at year end. Dr. Weisberg indicated that Ken Schiff will temporarily oversee the Toxicology Department until a replacement is identified as the agency has a number of high profile projects in that area. In particular, Dr. Weisberg related recent conversations with the State Water Board about potentially assisting with better understanding the sources of variability in the *Ceriodaphnia* reproduction toxicity test. Commissioner Mogus elaborated, indicating that the State Board is planning to proceed with revised toxicity provisions, but recognizes that implementation could be problematic for *Ceriodaphnia* if there is excessive variability; as a result she is open to delayed implementation for the *Ceriodaphnia* reproduction test if the SWRCB can develop a partnership with the regulated community to study ways for improving the quality of the *Ceriodaphnia* reproduction test. Several Commissioners responded that this seemed like an appropriate way to proceed and would be willing to share costs for such a study if it were initiated through a neutral party like SCCWRP.

Dr. Weisberg next described the capital improvements that staff are undertaking in response to having signed a new ten-year lease and having obtained tenant improvement funds from the landlord. He indicated that those improvements fell into four categories: 1) Improvements to the conference room, upgrading the sound and video quality to better support remote meetings, 2) Laboratory improvements, including a dynamic exposure laboratory for acidification studies, a new genomics extraction laboratory, a new microplastics measurements laboratory with enhanced air filtering and circulation controls, 3) Building out part of the warehouse to create additional office space, and 4) Repair/ replacement of carpet in selected areas like the main hallway and conference rooms.

The Executive Director finished his report by giving a short update on the Agency's 50th anniversary event that will take place October 11, 2019 at the Aquarium of the Pacific. Invitations would be extended soon and Dr. Weisberg reminded them that each Commissioner has been allocated eight seats for their Board members or others of their choice.

7. CTAG Report

CTAG Chair Chad Loflen provided an update on CTAG's May 23 meeting. He reported that CTAG had voted to approve the four thematic research plans that were included in the Commission package and recommended Commission approval of the 2019-20 Research Plan. In addition, CTAG reviewed and recommended approval of the contracts in the next agenda item.

8. Contract Review

Weisberg identified that the agency had been informed about one new contract that requires Commission approval subsequent to the memo that had been mailed to the Commission and asked that it be added for consideration:

- 1) State Water Resources Control Board (\$1,000,000)
Standardizing Microplastic Assessment Methods for Drinking Water

Commission Council Beverlin identified that while this was not technically a change to the agenda, he recommended a conservative approach following the Brown Act procedure that requires a 2/3 vote to change an agenda item. Commissioner Herberg motioned to allow the contract to be added to the agenda, and Commissioner Vroom seconded the motion. The Commission approved adding the contract to the agenda unanimously, with Commissioner Fleck abstaining. Voting on the contract was deferred until after presentation of agenda item eleven.

Weisberg presented the remaining 13 contracts, all of which have values of \$250,000 or less and thus do not require Commission approval. These were presented to ensure consistency of the agency's directions with the Commission's intentions.

- 1) Ocean Protection Council (through SJSURF) (\$109,650)
Framework for Condition Assessment and Monitoring of Estuary MPAs
- 2) County of Orange (\$31,584)
County of Los Angeles (\$31,584)
County of San Diego (\$31,584)
County of Riverside (\$31,584)
County of San Bernardino (\$19,189)
County of Ventura (\$31,584)
City of San Diego (\$31,584)
City of Los Angeles (\$31,584)
City of Long Beach (\$15,792)
Caltrans (\$19,189)
SMC 2019-2020 Technical Support
- 3) Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (\$150,000)
Mountains and Recreation Conservation Authority (\$150,000)
Los Angeles River Environmental Flow Study
- 4) County of Orange (through Geosyntec) (\$200,000)
Wildlife Conservation Board (through UC Davis) (\$115,000)
Flow Conditions Study
- 5) County of Orange (\$173,000)
Shellfish Bacterial Water Quality
- 6) Orange County Sanitation District (\$50,040)

CEC Screening in Marine Environment

- 7) Orange County Sanitation District (\$50,040)
Orange County Sanitation District (\$14,000)
Regional Monitoring – Biological Impacts Assessment
- 8) San Gabriel River Regional Monitoring Program (through Aquatic Bioassay & Consulting Laboratories) (\$99,458)
San Gabriel River Regional Monitoring Landscape Modeling
- 9) San Diego County (\$198,000)
Sanitary Sewer Exfiltration Pilot Study
- 10) City of San Clemente (through Wood Environment) (\$31,830)
San Clemente Source Identification
- 11) Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (\$36,000)
San Gabriel River Adaptative Management Plan
- 12) Tampa Bay Estuary Program (through Janicki Environmental) (\$10,600)
Tampa Bay Estuary Technical Support
- 13) City of San Diego (\$4,000)
Regional Monitoring – Biological Impacts Assessment

The Commission did not raise any objections to the contracts, though there were several questions. Commissioner Anselm asked about timeline for the exfiltration contract. Ken Schiff responded that the project should begin this summer with a 36 month timeline. Commissioner Purdy asked about how well contract three was coordinated with other studies being performed in the LA River. Eric Stein explained the high level of coordination.

9. Fiscal Year 2019/2020 Research Plan and Budget

Deputy Director Ken Schiff introduced the 2019-20 Executive Summary Research Plan and explained that the projects that are planned for the coming year are in close alignment with the priorities of SCCWRP's member agencies. He further indicated that this year's Research Plan includes a new research theme on best management practices. This represents a new direction for SCCWRP, moving beyond problem identification to advancing engineering solutions. The research theme would encompass an array of activities from engineering development, maintenance strategy evaluation and modeling to determine optimal deployment strategies for maximum effectiveness at minimum costs. Commissioner Smythe asked whether there was a prioritization for solutions among pollutant types to which Schiff responded that we are envisioning this as a decadal investment that includes effectiveness assessment for a full range of pollutant types. Commissioner Lafferty suggested that this type of research line will require a large

investment in technology transfer, such as trainings and development of guidance manuals. Schiff indicated he agreed, and that staff were prepared to make that investment.

Commissioner Anselm motioned to approve the research plan and budget, and Commissioner Mogus seconded the motion. The Commission approved the motion unanimously.

10. Resolution Establishing Rules Governing Compensation, Benefits, and Personnel, Policies and Procedures

Executive Director Weisberg introduced the Salary Resolution by reviewing the changes from last year's resolution, which were minor. Commissioner Vroom indicated that the Personnel and Finance Committee had reviewed those changes and recommended adoption. Commissioner Vroom motioned to approve the resolution, and Commissioner Anselm seconded the motion. The Commission approved the motion unanimously, with Commissioner Fleck abstaining.

11. Microplastics Measurement Methods Workshop

The Executive Director described a workshop that SCCWRP hosted focused on the latest developments in microplastic measurements. He indicated that the workshop was motivated by two recent legislative actions, one requiring the Ocean Protection Council to develop an oceans microplastic management strategy and the other requiring the State Water Board to develop, standardize and require application of microplastics measurement methods for drinking water within two years. The workshop was a two-day event. The first day focused on talks by leaders in the field about the present state of the art and was attended by about 120 people. The conclusion from that day is that methods are far from standardized and standardization is hampered by a shortage of method evaluation studies. The second day was limited to invited experts and focused on developing a study plan for evaluating the relative performance for an array of methods presently being employed around the world. Subsequent to that workshop, 28 laboratories have agreed to participate in that method evaluation study, which SCCWRP agreed to lead beginning fall 2019. Weisberg also indicated that the workshop was so successful that the scientific journal Applied Spectroscopy agreed to devote an entire issue to the topic, highlighting the papers presented at the workshop.

Weisberg next described the contract that was being offered by the State Water Board Division of Drinking Water that was deferred from agenda item 8, indicating that the contract will likely have several parts: a) Support the methods evaluation study, b) Develop standard operating protocols for the best performing method, c) Assist the Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program with an evaluation protocol for inspecting labs employing that method, and d) Holding a workshop to assess the state of knowledge regarding critical thresholds for the amount of microplastics in drinking water. Commissioner Herberg asked if the Scope of Work was available yet and Weisberg indicated that it should be available in about a month. Herberg asked that staff share it with CTAG when it became available. Commissioner Vroom motioned to approve the contract and Commissioner Smythe seconded the motion. The Commission approved the motion unanimously, with Commissioners Mogus and Fleck abstaining.

12. Outcomes from the Coupled Physical-Biogeochemical Model

Martha Sutula described progress on the physical-biogeochemical ocean model to assess the extent to which local anthropogenic nutrient inputs enhance local acidification and hypoxia. She described the project as having three phases: a) Building the model, b) Validating the model, particularly for this type of application, and c) Running scenarios to assess various management strategies. She indicated that the model was well along in its development, built on a 300-meter grid size for application in Southern California. She indicated that ocean modeling at this fine scale is among the most advanced in the world and requires nearly a month of supercomputer time for a single model run. She also indicated that the model performance was judged excellent by the model development team. SCCWRP staff are working with CTAG and a project stakeholder group to ensure they were satisfied with model performance as well. George Robertson is chairing a CTAG committee that is meeting intersessionally with SCCWRP staff to further those validation activities. Sutula also presented some of the early model runs, which were for the period between 1997-2000 because that period had a range of El Nino and La Nina conditions that facilitated model performance evaluation. She shared outputs comparing existing oceanic conditions and oceanic conditions with complete removal of all nutrient inputs, looking to see if there are any differences between the two extremes. The differences in hypoxia and ocean acidification were far larger than modeling error, but not necessarily large enough to demand management action. Sutula reported that CTAG had formed a committee led by Katherine Walsh of SWRCB Ocean Unit to identify the most relevant management scenarios to evaluate and to better define what constitutes unacceptably excessive effects of local nutrient inputs from a regulatory perspective.

Commissioner Ferrante indicated he was impressed by the quality and relevance of this work, but he also remarked how different the discharge conditions are now from what they were in 1997 and how different they are likely to be from future discharges given the reuse plans of SCCWRP's POTW members. Sutula agreed and indicated that the model would be updated to present day discharge conditions once the global atmospheric models, on which the model relies, were completed for current conditions. She also indicated that the model was robust to running future scenarios based on POTW plans, which the CTAG application committee is planning to define for the modeling team.

13. Approaches to Setting Trace Metal Site-specific Objectives

Executive Director Weisberg introduced this item as a review presentation requested by the Commission, rather than one focused on SCCWRP research. Steve Bay described the two approaches that are presently being used to set site-specific objectives for metals: the water effects ratio and the biotic ligand model. He indicated that the water effects ratio is the more commonly used approach in California, in part because this approach is included in the California Toxics Rule and the biotic ligand model is not yet EPA-approved for marine applications. Commissioner Mogus indicated that she had requested this presentation because there are considerable differences in how the water effects ratio is being applied among Regional Boards and the State Board is considering developing additional guidance to enhance consistency. Steve Bay reinforced those differences, pointing out several places where the EPA guidance for the water effects ratio is non-

specific and the amount of data used for making these decisions varies considerably among applications. Commissioner Anselm asked how those non-specific areas are addressed, to which Bay responded these decisions are presently at the discretion of each Regional Board. Commissioner Purdy indicated interest in the State Board's direction since her region has a number of potential applications for copper site-specific objectives and would appreciate guidance regarding application of the biotic ligand model, which appears to be more scientifically robust, less resource intensive, yet protective of beneficial uses.

14. Update on State's Recycled Water Policy Related to Instream Flows

This item was removed from the agenda due to time constraints.

15. Other Business and Communications

Commissioner Purdy asked for the date of the upcoming Workshop at SCCWRP to explore new collaborations between stormwater and wastewater management agencies. Dr. Weisberg responded that it is scheduled for August 29 and would focus on identifying and addressing the biggest barriers to stormwater diversion, with other potential topics to be covered at additional workshops if this one is successful.

16. Future Meeting Agenda Items

Executive Director Weisberg reminded the Commission that they had previously requested that the September meeting focus on microbiology, including an update on SCCWRP's source identification work to distinguish among specific sources of human contamination, and a Newport Bay study that will revisit the recreational shellfishing water-quality standard. The Director had also received requests for updates on San Diego Board's Human Fecal Sources Investigative Order. There was also a request for a presentation regarding the Regional Board 9 proposed basin plan amendment to incorporate biological objectives, which will appear on the December agenda.

17. Public Comments

None

18. Adjournment

Commission Justine Kimball adjourned the meeting at 12:05 PM until the next Commission meeting on September 6, 2019 at 9:00 AM.

Attest:

Bryan Nece
Secretary