

**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**

**September 6, 2024  
9:00 AM**

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**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Susana Arredondo — *Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board*  
Eric Lindberg — *Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board*  
Dave Gibson — *San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board*  
Jim Marchese — *City of Los Angeles*  
Robert Ferrante — *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*  
Rob Thompson — *Orange County Sanitation District*  
Orelia DeBraal — *City of San Diego*  
Arne Anselm — *Ventura County Watershed Protection District*  
Mark Lombos — *Los Angeles County Department of Public Works*  
Amanda Carr — *County of Orange*  
Justin Gamble — *County of San Diego*  
Phillip Crader — *State Water Resources Control Board*

**REMOTE COMMISSIONERS**

Kaitlyn Kalua — *California Ocean Protection Council*

**OTHER COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Kris McFadden — *City of San Diego*  
Jayne Joy — *Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board*  
Lan Wiborg — *Orange County Sanitation District*  
Grant Sharp — *County of Orange*  
Jenny Newman — *Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board*  
Martha Tremblay — *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*  
Laurie Walsh — *San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board*

**STAFF PRESENT**

Stephen Weisberg — *Executive Director*  
Wes Beverlin — *Legal Counsel*  
Ken Schiff — *Deputy Director*  
Elizabeth Fassman-Beck — *Department Head*  
John Griffith — *Department Head*  
Alvina Mehinto — *Department Head*  
Eric Stein — *Department Head*  
Martha Sutula — *Department Head*  
Scott Martindale — *Communications Director*  
Edward Tiernan — *Engineer*

Emily Lau — *Communications Specialist*  
Jill Tupitza — *Scientist*

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Ryan Kempster — *City of San Diego*  
Josh Westfall — *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*  
Chad Loflen — *San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board*  
Sam Choi — *Orange County Sanitation District*  
Danny Tang — *Orange County Sanitation District*  
Jared Voskuhl — *California Association of Sanitation Agencies*  
Richard Boon — *Riverside County Flood Protection and Water Conservation District (remote presenter)*  
LB Nye — *Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (remote presenter)*  
Rebecca Fitzgerald — *State Water Resources Control Board (remote presenter)*

The meeting was broadcast on Zoom for audience members. Remote audience members were invited to address the Commission by making a request via the Zoom Q&A box.

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

Commissioner Kalua requested to participate remotely due to travel constraints, which the Commission approved unanimously.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- 1. Minutes of Meetings Held June 7, 2024**
- 2. Quarterly Financial Statement for the Period Ended June 30, 2024**
- 3. Quarterly Statement of Investments on June 30, 2024**
- 4. Minutes of CTAG Meetings Held August 8, 2024**

Commissioner Carr motioned to approve Consent Items 1-4 with a minor edit to the June 2024 Commission minutes requested by Commissioner Ferrante. Commissioner Ferrante seconded the motion.

The Commission agreed to delay voting until later in the meeting, to combine this roll-call vote with Agenda Item 5.

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**5. Request to Change City of San Diego Commissioner Designation**  
Executive Director Weisberg explained that Commissioners are designated by their position within their organizations, as defined in SCCWRP’s Joint Powers Agreement (JPA), and any changes to designations require at least a two-third approval vote of the Commission. He said the City of San Diego requested to change its Commissioner

designation from the Director of Public Utilities to the Deputy Chief Operating Officer, who oversees both wastewater and stormwater. The change would replace Juan Guerreiro with Kris McFadden. Commissioner DeBraul said the City's requested change is an opportunity to have someone who oversees both stormwater and wastewater operations representing the City of San Diego on the Commission.

Commissioner Carr motioned to approve Consent Items 1-4 and Agenda Item 5, and Commissioner Anselm seconded the motion. The Commission approved all motioned items by roll call, with Commissioner DeBraul abstaining on Agenda Item 5.

After the vote, Commissioner McFadden joined the meeting, replacing Commissioner DeBraul at the Commission table. Commissioner McFadden, who has been with the City of San Diego for more than 15 years, said he is excited to be on the Commission and work with SCCWRP.

#### **6. Election of the Commission Chair and Vice Chair.**

Executive Director Weisberg explained that the Commission is required to elect a Chair and Vice Chair annually. While elections occur annually, the Commission Chair and Vice Chair historically have been re-elected so as to serve two successive terms. The current Chair and Vice Chair have served two terms each. Additionally, Weisberg noted that if the Chair comes from the regulatory sector, the Vice Chair typically comes from the regulated sector, and vice versa.

Commissioner Gamble nominated Kris McFadden as Commission Chair, and Dave Gibson as Commission Vice Chair. Commissioner Ferrante seconded the motion. The Commission approved the motion unanimously by roll call vote, with Commissioners McFadden and Gibson abstaining.

#### **7. Future Meeting Dates**

Executive Director Weisberg proposed holding the 2025 Commission meetings on March 7, June 6, September 5, and December 5. Commissioners expressed support for these dates. Commissioner Thompson motioned to approve the meeting dates for 2025, and Commissioner Carr seconded the motion.

The Commission agreed to delay voting on this agenda item until later in the meeting, to combine this roll-call vote with Agenda Item 11.

#### **8. Personnel and Finance Committee Report**

Commissioner Thompson, Chair of the Personnel and Finance Committee, reported that SCCWRP remains in strong financial health. He said the Committee has begun discussing renewal of SCCWRP's Joint Powers Agreement (JPA); the existing JPA will expire in June 2026, and the next JPA is anticipated to take about a year to execute. The Committee will have virtual monthly meetings in October and November to discuss the JPA, then meet in person during the Personnel and Finance Committee's regular December meeting. Thompson encouraged all Commissioners to attend these meetings, and noted that the discussions will include deciding how much member agencies should pay in annual dues.

Asked by Commissioner Gamble whether a subcommittee has been set up to review the JPA, Commissioner Thompson said the development of the JPA will take place through the Personnel and Finance Committee, and that all Commissioners are welcome to participate in these meetings.

### **9. Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director Weisberg welcomed Commission Chair Kris McFadden from the City of San Diego, who replaced Juan Guerreiro after approval of the designation change in Agenda Item 5. He also welcome Alternate Commissioners Orelia DeBraal from the City of San Diego and Laurie Walsh from the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, who replaced Peter Vroom and Kelly Dorsey, respectively. Weisberg also welcomed Commissioner Phillip Crader from the California State Water Resources Control Board and Alternate Commissioner Eric Lindberg from the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board to their first meeting at the Commission table. Weisberg announced that Karen Mogus, who previously served as Commissioner for the California State Water Resources Control Board for eight years, will rejoin the Commission as an Alternate Commissioner; Mogus replaces Greg Gearheart, who served as an Alternate Commissioner for six years. The new Commissioners who were present expressed their excitement to be on the Commission and to work with SCCWRP.

Weisberg provided an update on the independent expert panel review evaluating the ROMS-BEC coastal ocean modeling work. He said Kevin Hardy from the National Water Research Institute (NWRI), which is facilitating the expert panel's deliberations, gave a presentation to CTAG at its August 2024 meeting. Hardy told CTAG that the expert panel released a draft report outlining the panel's findings for public comment in June 2024 and received 76 comments that can be grouped into three categories: 1) readability of the report, 2) clarity of the content, and 3) request for additional information about the content. The expert panel is revising the draft report based on the public comments, and also is planning to provide written responses to every comment. Weisberg said the Panel plans to release their final report ahead of an October 24 meeting of the review process Steering Committee and that the Chair of the Expert Panel is planning to attend that meeting to answer questions. Weisberg suggested that if this schedule holds, that he give a presentation at the Commission's December 2024 meeting about what actions SCCWRP plans to take in response to the report.

Weisberg said that in addition to presenting on its own work, SCCWRP also occasionally provides Commission briefings on high-profile environmental topics in the news. He invited Senior Scientist Smith to talk about a large-scale marine mammal stranding event that began in early July 2024 in Southern California, including SCCWRP's involvement in response efforts. Smith began by explaining that the ongoing stranding event has so far impacted more than 300 marine mammals, primarily sea lions. By comparison, last year's stranding event impacted about three times more marine mammals. Most strandings were observed in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara, with some standings as far south as Orange County. Researchers linked the cause of the summer standing event to domoic acid, a toxin produced by a common type of harmful algal bloom (HAB) known as *Pseudo-nitzschia*.

Because domoic acid can bioaccumulate and transfer in the food web, marine mammals like sea lions that depend on a large amount of fish as part of their diet are especially vulnerable. SCCWRP helped mobilize and coordinate a rapid-response effort to collect offshore field sampling data to complement data being collected via established nearshore HAB monitoring.

Asked by Commissioner Walsh if stranded animals can be brought back to good health, Smith said the animals have a 50-70% chance of survival if rescue teams are able to quickly treat them. Asked by Commissioner Ferrante if Central and Northern California are experiencing similar stranding events, Smith said strandings have been observed as far north as Santa Cruz. To understand the timing of the strandings, researchers are looking at shifts in climate patterns and water temperature, as HABs are more typical in this region during spring rather than summer.

Weisberg continued his report and said one of SCCWRP's key strengths is bringing together diverse voices to have conversation and work toward consensus. SCCWRP, which hosted an average of 14 meetings a month before the pandemic, is presently holding an average of 7 meetings a month. Weisberg highlighted two high-profile, upcoming meetings that will be hosted at SCCWRP: 1) the Southern California Stormwater Monitoring Coalition (SMC) is hosting a three-day expert panel workshop in September to plan its research agenda for the next five years, and 2) SCCWRP is co-hosting a workshop in October with the California Ocean Science Trust and the Ocean Carbon & Biogeochemistry Program to quantify the effectiveness and potential disadvantages of marine carbon dioxide removal (mCDR) technology.

## **10. CTAG Report**

CTAG Chair Ryan Kempster reported that CTAG has been getting strong in-person attendance at its meetings. Although CTAG members are not required to attend in person, 10 of the 14 member agencies attended the most recent CTAG meeting in person and he felt that was effective. He encouraged Commissioners to have their CTAG representatives attend meetings in person. He introduced Danny Tang as the new CTAG representative for the Orange County Sanitation District, replacing Sam Choi.

Kempster said that CTAG met in person for an intersessional research planning workshop in April 2024 and decided to morph the Climate Change research theme to Climate Resiliency and better define projects under this theme. He said CTAG reviewed a draft of the new Climate Resiliency detailed thematic research plan at its August 2024 meeting and requested additional changes. SCCWRP will present the revised research plan at CTAG's November 2024 meeting. Kempster said CTAG's next intersessional planning workshop will revisit and update SCCWRP's Microbial Water Quality research theme; a date has not been set yet.

Kempster said CTAG is piloting a revised evaluation form for reviewing SCCWRP journal manuscripts and other documents prior to publication; the goal is to help make the manuscript review process more effective, insightful, and helpful for SCCWRP.

Kempster reported that CTAG at its August 2024 meeting formed a subcommittee to develop a scale/index for determining scientific readiness of SCCWRP's work as it relates to policy and management decisions. The subcommittee will meet in the upcoming months and provide a report out at the Commission's December meeting.

Kempster said SCCWRP and CTAG decided to jointly pursue two related projects together that will provide vehicles for enhanced SCCWRP-CTAG interaction and collaboration: 1) a study quantifying the cost of environmental monitoring across the region, and 2) a study quantifying mass emissions across the region. SCCWRP previously worked with CTAG to complete similar quantification efforts many years ago. CTAG has been asked to nominate representatives from their agencies who will commit to working on these studies with SCCWRP. The time commitment is estimated to be about one meeting per month while the projects are active, plus time to retrieve historical data sets.

Kempster said CTAG discussed whether SCCWRP should pursue artificial intelligence (AI) research and concluded they would like to see staff pursue two projects: 1) using AI to review underwater video camera footage to identify fish observed in a water body, and 2) using AI to analyze satellite images of wetlands to assess their condition. SCCWRP is investigating the feasibility of these projects, and CTAG will discuss this future research direction at its November 2024 meeting.

Commissioners expressed support for the planned joint collaborative studies. Commissioner Anselm said the cost of monitoring study will produce insights that help get at the all-important question of the value of monitoring. Commissioner Carr echoed this sentiment, noting monitoring requirements are commonly added, but rarely taken away. Asked by Commissioner Marchese if reducing cost of monitoring is an area that will also be looked at, Kempster said it is a possible consideration, as there are some unintentional crossover between studying the cost of monitoring and how to reduce the cost. Commissioner Wiborg commented that if the AI wetlands project moves forward, a fundamental question will be to understand AI's capabilities for delineating wetland boundaries.

Kempster said CTAG recommends the Commission hear presentations at future meetings on: 1) an overview of the Statewide Estuary Monitoring Program, 2) an update on the independent expert panel review of the ROMS-BEC coastal modeling work, and 3) plans for the next biennial SCCWRP Symposium, an all-day event for staff of SCCWRP member agencies to learn about and interact with SCCWRP science; the Symposium is expected to take place in spring 2025.

Kempster said CTAG recommends the Commission approve a draft fact sheet on microplastics for publication.

Kempster said CTAG recommends approval of two SCCWRP contracts (Contracts #1 and #2, Agenda Item 11). CTAG does not have a recommendation on Contract #3, as SCCWRP was offered this contract after the August 2024 CTAG meeting.

## 11. Contract Review

Executive Director Weisberg reminded the Commission that SCCWRP recently redesigned the contract memo for projects that require Commission approval to more clearly communicate the management implications of SCCWRP taking on this work. He said SCCWRP would make a presentation about any new contracts that CTAG believes the Commission should hear. At its August 2024 meeting, CTAG recommended the Commission hear a presentation on Contract #2.

SCCWRP's Joint Powers Agreement requires Commission approval of contracts of more than \$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 asked for approval of the following contracts.

- 1) Ocean Protection Council (through San Jose State University) (\$989,000)  
Statewide Estuary Monitoring Program
- 2) US EPA (through University of Nevada) (\$371,104)  
National Stormwater Center of Excellence

Department Head Fassman-Beck explained that this contract will establish one of four Centers of Excellence for Stormwater Control Infrastructure Technologies across the nation. SCCWRP will co-lead the Southwest Center of Excellence with the Desert Research Institute to help bring together researchers in California, Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico to advance knowledge and address urban stormwater issues in the arid southwest.

Commissioners congratulated SCCWRP for this contract and expressed excitement about the opportunity to tap into the Center's expansive knowledge base and work toward standardizing stormwater research and programs across the Southwest. Asked by Commissioner Carr about potential involvement by the California Stormwater Quality Association (CASQA), Fassman-Beck said the Center welcomes widespread participation and engagement. Asked by Commissioner Lindberg about potential next steps after the initial funding to support the Center runs out after two years, Fassman-Beck said the Center is expected to evolve organically in response to feedback, and noted that the Center will offer an important value proposition that could lead to future opportunities in areas like stormwater capture and reuse. Asked by Commission Chair McFadden if there is any opportunity for the Commission to be involved, Fassman-Beck said SCCWRP could host a workshop with stormwater member agencies to discuss opportunities.

- 3) Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (\$250,000)  
West Coast Ocean Data Portal

Commissioners engaged in extensive discussion about how to consider contracts that SCCWRP is offered after CTAG meetings but before Commission meetings, given that about one-third of all SCCWRP contracts are offered during this window. Contract #3 is the latest

example of a contract that was offered to SCCWRP in this window. Weisberg said contracts offered in this window are marked with an asterisk on the contract memo. Commissioner Thompson said that he would be voting no on Contract #3 on principle, to send a message that this process is inadequate. He also noted that while two contracts requiring Commission approval (Contracts #1 and #2) include an in-depth staff report, Contract #3 includes only a one-sentence description. Weisberg responded that the timing of when Contract #3 was offered to SCCWRP is unfortunate; it was offered just one day prior to the distribution of the contract memo, precluding staff's ability to prepare a detailed staff report. Asked by Commission Chair McFadden whether SCCWRP can delay voting on these contracts until next quarter, Weisberg said that these were end of fiscal year funds that would likely be lost if not accepted at this time. Asked by Commissioner Thompson for more information about Contract #3, Weisberg said the contract is \$50K per year to pay for server maintenance of the West Coast Ocean Alliance data portal and involves no data generation. Weisberg suggested that staff could explore setting up a special CTAG meeting before Commission meetings to discuss any contracts that may come in after CTAG meetings. Commissioners expressed support for SCCWRP working with CTAG to improve the review process for contracts that are offered to SCCWRP between CTAG and Commission meetings.

The Commission accepted a public comment from Jared Voskuhl from the California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA), who reminded the Commission about a similar instance at the Commission's March 2024 meeting where a contract for ROMS-BEC modeling work in Central Coast region was brought to the Commission for approval despite coming in during the window between the CTAG and Commission meeting and not being reviewed by CTAG.

Commissioner Anselm motioned to approve Agenda Item 7 and the three contracts, plus to direct staff to improve the CTAG review process for contracts offered between CTAG and Commission meetings, and Commissioner Aredondo seconded the motion. The Commission approved the motion with a roll-call vote, with Commissioner Kalua abstaining on Contract #1 and Commissioner Thompson voting no on Contract #3.

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

- 4) County of San Diego (through San Diego Regional Board SEP Fund) (\$16,500)  
SMC Regional Monitoring Program
- 5) Southwest Wetlands Interpretative Association (\$17,280)  
Analysis of San Diego County eDNA Bight Samples

The Commission did not raise any concerns with these contracts.



## **12. BMP Performance Index**

Department Head Fassman-Beck began the presentation by explaining that California invests millions of dollars into structural stormwater best management practices (BMPs) to help address runoff water quality problems, with Los Angeles County alone spending more than \$280 million annually to design, build, and maintain structural BMPs. However, stormwater managers historically have not had access to a standardized method of evaluating a BMP's performance and determining whether this performance is adequate for helping to achieve downstream water quality objectives. In response, SCCWRP and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works have developed an index scoring tool that rates the overall performance of various structural BMPs across a watershed. Significantly, the ratings can be repeated across space and time, providing stormwater managers with BMP performance scores that are directly comparable, regardless of BMP type, media type and watershed. Index scores also correspond to suggested management actions. The index tool considers performance from both a water-quality and hydrologic perspective.

Two guest speakers were invited to provide management perspectives on the BMP performance index tool: Richard Boon, Chief of the Watershed Protection Division at the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, and LB Nye, Chief of Regional Programs at the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Boon said he and his team are test-driving the beta version of the BMP performance index tool and have found the tool to be immensely valuable in helping managers quantify the value they are getting out of their investments and stormwater programs. Boon said the tool translates performance data into actionable insights.

Nye was the second guest speaker. Nye said L.A. Regional Board does not view the performance index tool as a regulatory tool, but rather as a valuable tool for dialoguing with regulated parties about the effectiveness of their BMP investments. She said she is looking forward to seeing whether the tool generates actionable information that improves BMP outcomes.

Asked by Commissioner Carr how the performance index tool can support efforts to determine how often BMPs should be monitored at a programmatic level, Fassman-Beck said these insights will come over time, as more monitoring data are collected and the BMP index is used to assess performance and then adjustments are made to BMP design, construction and maintenance regimes. Commission Gamble said he is interested in using the index to understand how effectively public dollars are being spent on BMPs.

Asked by Commission Chair McFadden how the tool can be used to evaluate the success of stream restoration actions, Fassman-Beck said the index tool provides a direct connection between BMP performance and downstream impacts. Commissioner Ferrante said it will be important for BMP monitoring designs to offer guidance on how to collect representative performance data, as BMP performance can vary widely based on a BMP's age and the timing of data collection relative to the maintenance schedule. Ferrante also noted the need to find the right balance between BMP performance optimization and the high potential costs of optimizing performance. Commissioner Lombos said the core value

proposition of the index tool for L.A. County is that the insights generated will enable managers to make modifications during the planning, design, and operations and maintenance phases of the BMP lifecycle. Asked by Commissioner Newman if the index tool can be used to predict BMP performance, Fassman-Beck said predictive capabilities will come in a later phase of the index tool's development, after much more BMP performance data have been collected. Fassman-Beck encouraged Commissioners to support ongoing efforts by the Southern California Stormwater Monitoring Coalition (SMC) to collect regional BMP performance data. With more data, researchers also will be able to use the index to evaluate cost effectiveness of BMP investments and develop actionable guidance for optimizing BMP maintenance regimes.

### **13. Biointegrity Update**

Principal Scientist Mazor began the presentation by explaining that SCCWRP developed two tools – the California Stream Condition Index (CSCI) and Algal Stream Condition Index (ASCI) – for assessing the biointegrity of wadeable streams. As managers begin using these bioassessment tools in their programs, they asked whether the tools can be used in intermittent, nonperennial streams and modified channels. Mazor explained that biointegrity scores are not statistically different in perennial and nonperennial streams in Southern California, but that the scores are different in Northern California and require additional data to calculate a region-specific threshold for nonperennial streams in Northern California. Addressing modified channels is more complex and he has been working to tease out how scores differ among different types of modified channels, which can include soft or hard bottoms, and channels with zero, one or two hardened sides. SCCWRP classified modified channels based on the material that makes up their bed and bank, then evaluated their response to stress. Researchers found that biointegrity scores are highest for modified channels with a soft bottom and one hard side, with about 40% of these channels meeting the CSCI biointegrity threshold. Although water quality was also found to influence index scores, modified channel type had a significant effect on the strength of this relationship. The SMC and SCCWRP are continuing to investigate this issue, including exploring how to adapt stream causal assessment investigations for modified channels specifically.

Rebecca Fitzgerald, Manager of Water Quality Standards and Assessment at the California State Water Resources Control Board, was invited to provide a regulatory perspective on how the State Water Board views the modified channels analyses. Fitzgerald said the State is closely following this work and is exploring how to use the analyses to develop informed policies and management programs, including for integrated reporting assessments, biological objectives, and biostimulatory and nutrient water-quality standards. The State Board is planning a workshop in 2025 that will explore a path forward for the State to potentially develop biointegrity thresholds for modified channels, following the San Diego Regional Board's decision to adopt biointegrity thresholds for some types of modified channels (excluding fully hardened channels).

Commission Chair McFadden said two-thirds of modified channels in the City of San Diego don't meet the new San Diego Regional Board biological objectives and that efforts to comply will require property acquisition and tens of millions of dollars for restoration

projects. He also said it will be important to have confidence that these costly potential investments, once implemented, will enable the City to meet bio-objectives. He also expressed concern that these restoration projects would run counter to affordable housing goals. Commissioner Lombos added that stream restoration projects could run counter to stormwater capture and use goals. Commissioner Gamble added that restoration work could result in the creation of new habitat that, in a worst-case scenario, could be deemed non-compliant by an entity like the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and ultimately need to be removed. Commissioner Carr added that the flood control benefits provided by modified channels need to be included in the potential development of bio-objectives for these channels. She also said that if fully hardened channels continue to be excluded from being required to meet biointegrity thresholds, regulated parties could be inadvertently incentivized to fully harden all modified channels. Commissioner Gibson expressed confidence that managers will figure out how to identify modified channel sites that are well-suited for stream restoration activities that improve biointegrity scores – while simultaneously balancing the need to meet affordable housing goals and not compromising flood protection goals. Commissioners ended their discussion by prioritizing what additional research questions need to be answered. They identified the need to understand the influence of three main factors in affecting a modified channel’s ability to reliably meet biointegrity goals: routine channel maintenance activities, management actions to improve water quality, and investments in stream restoration projects.

#### **14. Artificial Intelligence**

The Commission agreed to postpone this informational item to its next meeting in December due to time constraints.

#### **15. Strategic Planning Meeting**

Executive Director Weisberg reminded the Commission that during their October 2023 strategic planning meeting, SCCWRP and the Commission discussed how to refine how SCCWRP operates to enhance SCCWRP’s effectiveness. The Commission identified refinements that fall into three main categories: 1) Improving how SCCWRP translates its science to application, 2) engaging affected stakeholders outside of its member agencies, and 3) building trust by improving transparency. He provided a one-year status update on the progress SCCWRP has made on all three fronts. To better translate science to application, SCCWRP focused on better differentiating Commission and CTAG meetings – specifically, reinforcing that CTAG meetings are about vetting the quality and readiness of SCCWRP’s work for management uses, and that Commission meetings are about discussing the policy and management implications of SCCWRP’s work. To that end, CTAG has refined its manuscript review process, developed a quality assurance strategy for new SCCWRP data products, and is in the process of developing a readiness rating for SCCWRP science. Meanwhile, the Commission is hearing shorter technical presentations and inviting guest speakers to share management perspectives, which then kicks off a robust policy-focused discussion. To enhance engagement with non-member agencies, SCCWRP is becoming more proactive about interacting with key stakeholders, conducting more collaborative projects with member agencies, and supporting an effort by the California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA) to create a statewide wastewater research consortium.

To enhance transparency, SCCWRP has started publicizing and webcasting Commission meetings, expanded the amount of information available to Commissioners about new contracts offered to SCCWRP, made more of its published data more readily accessible, and is proactively targeting specific key audiences with SCCWRP email communications. Weisberg said SCCWRP is still working on developing a strategy for when projects should have stakeholder advisory committees and who should serve. He also reminded the Commission that SCCWRP unveiled its communications strategy during the strategic planning meeting, but that the Commission requested to delay finalizing the strategy until after the operational changes have been made.

#### **16. Fact Sheets**

The Commission agreed to skip the presentation on fact sheets due to time constraints, but agreed follow CTAG's recommendation to publish the fact sheet on microplastics. The Commission also agreed that the topic of the next fact sheet will be ocean acidification.

#### **17. Other Business and Communications**

Executive Director Weisberg introduced Jill Tupitza, a Scientist in SCCWRP's Biology Department who recently received her Ph.D. in oceanography and coastal sciences from Louisiana State University.

Commissioner Marchese expressed disappointment that there wasn't time during the meeting to get to every agenda item. Commissioners agreed that their three-hour meetings once a quarter no longer provide adequate time to consider all agenda items fully, and expressed support for extending their meetings to include a lunch. Weisberg also suggested that SCCWRP could start putting a timestamp on each item on the published agenda, to help the Commission pace the meeting and allocate time to get to every agenda item.

#### **17. Future Meeting Agenda Items**

The Commission agreed to hear at its December 2024 meeting the presentation on artificial intelligence (Agenda Item 14) that was postponed due to time constraints. Executive Director Weisberg said the Commission will also hear a report-out on the decision that SCCWRP and CTAG reach about how to improve the process for reviewing contracts that are offered to SCCWRP between CTAG and Commission meetings. The Commission will hear an update on the rating system that CTAG is working to develop for assessing the technical and management readiness of SCCWRP's work. The Commission will hear an update on the ROMS-BEC coastal ocean modeling work focusing on the findings and recommendations of the independent expert panel that reviewed this work. Finally, Weisberg said the Commission may hear a presentation about an update on the Statewide Estuary Monitoring Program; SCCWRP will make this presentation at the next CTAG meeting and let CTAG decide if SCCWRP should also make this presentation to the Commission.

Commissioner Thompson requested that the ROMS-BEC update include information about how SCCWRP plans to incorporate the independent expert panel's recommendations into ongoing Central Coast modeling work.

**18. Public Comments**

None

**19. Adjournment**

Commission Chair McFadden adjourned the meeting at 12:25 PM until the next Commission meeting on December 6, 2024 at 9:00 AM.

Attest:

Kenneth Schiff  
Deputy Director