

**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 6, 2025
9:00 AM**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Susana Arredondo — *Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Eric Lindberg — *Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Laurie Walsh — *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*
Grant Sharp — *County of Orange*
Neil Searing — *County of San Diego*
Peter Kozelka — *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9*
Phillip Crader — *State Water Resources Control Board*
Jenn Eckerle — *California Ocean Protection Council*

OTHER COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Lan Wiborg — *Orange County Sanitation District*
Jenny Newman — *Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Martha Tremblay — *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*
Jayne Joy — *Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board*

STAFF PRESENT

Stephen Weisberg — *Executive Director*
Bryan Nece — *Administrative Officer*
Ken Schiff — *Deputy Director*
Jessica Lienau — *Legal Counsel*
Elizabeth Fassman-Beck — *Department Head*
John Griffith — *Department Head*
Alvina Mehinto — *Department Head*
Charles Wong — *Department Head*
Eric Stein — *Department Head*
Martha Sutula — *Department Head*
Scott Martindale — *Communications Director*
Raphael Mazor — *Principal Scientist*
Leah Thornton Hampton — *Senior Scientist*
Joshua Steele — *Senior Scientist*
Kris Taniguchi-Quan — *Senior Scientist*
Jan Walker — *Senior Scientist*

Jill Tupitza — *Scientist*
Lara Jansen — *Scientist*
Danhui Xin — *Scientist*
Edward Tiernan — *Engineer*
Emily Lau — *Communications Specialist*
Andrea Benitez — *Research Technician*

OTHERS PRESENT

Lauren Briggs — *Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Josh Westfall — *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*
James Fortuna — *Orange County Public Works*
Danny Tang — *Orange County Sanitation District*
Samuel Choi — *Orange County Sanitation District*
Jared Voskuhl — *California Association of Sanitation Agencies*

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 DeBraal called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. Minutes of Meetings Held March 7, 2025**
- 2. Quarterly Financial Statement for the Period Ended March 31, 2025**
- 3. Quarterly Statement of Investments on March 31, 2025**
- 4. Minutes of CTAG Meetings Held May 8, 2025**

Commissioner Thompson motioned to approve Consent Items 1-4, and Commissioner Marchese seconded the motion. The Commission approved the motion unanimously with Commissioner Kozelka abstaining.

REGULAR AGENDA

5. Personnel and Finance Committee Report

Commissioner Thompson, Chair of the Personnel and Finance Committee, reported that the Committee has begun working with SCCWRP staff to create a five-year strategic plan for SCCWRP. The strategic plan will be adopted every five years, about a year in advance of initiating the renewal process for SCCWRP's Joint Powers Agreement (JPA), which also is renewed every five years. Thompson said the Committee will bring a draft of SCCWRP's first strategic plan to the Commission for review in 18 to 24 months.

Thompson said the Committee recommends approval of the annual budget (Agenda Item 9) and the annual salary resolution (Agenda Item 10).

6. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Weisberg welcomed Neil Searing from the San Diego County Watershed Protection Program as the newest Alternate Commissioner, filling a vacancy created when Christine Tolchin was promoted to Commissioner. Searing will also continue to serve as San Diego County's CTAG representative. Weisberg also announced that Jayne Joy is retiring from the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board after serving as a Commissioner for more than seven years. Weisberg welcomed Jessica Lienau to her first Commission meeting as SCCWRP's new legal counsel, replacing Wesley Beverlin, who retired. Weisberg introduced SCCWRP's two newest staff members: Lara Jansen, a Scientist in the Biology Department who just completed a post-doctoral fellowship with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Corvallis, Oregon, and Andrea Benitez, a Research Technician in the Microbiology Department who recently completed her undergraduate degree in microbiology at California State University, Long Beach.

Weisberg discussed how changes to federal policies and funding are affecting SCCWRP from a financial and operational perspective. He said SCCWRP's financials have been only minimally affected, as federal contracts account for less than 10% of SCCWRP's funding. In the last quarter, SCCWRP has had two ongoing contracts clawed back – a \$200,000 contract from the County of Los Angeles that relied on federal funding, and a \$20,000 contract with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that was nearly complete. However, Weisberg said there are no indications that other contracts would be affected. On the other hand, Weisberg said operational impacts from the federal changes have been a challenge, as SCCWRP works closely with numerous federal agencies and partners that are funded by federal agencies. Many key partners that SCCWRP has spent years building relationships with have left or been let go.

Weisberg invited Department Head Mehinto to provide an update on SCCWRP's work to coordinate water quality monitoring efforts among multiple organizations following the January 2025 wildfires in Southern California. Mehinto said SCCWRP was asked to extend its original coordination activities, which were scheduled to end in July 2025, and to begin doing integrated data analyses. Mehinto said upcoming products include an interactive map consolidated at the beach and watershed levels. Mehinto said some groups were able to mobilize within 24 hours of a surprise May 2025 storm to collect wet-weather samples.

Lastly, Weisberg said that SCCWRP is continuing to prioritize in-person meetings that bring people together to work toward consensus. SCCWRP hosts an average of nine meetings a month. Weisberg highlighted several important meetings that were hosted at SCCWRP last quarter: 1) the California Estuarine Research Society's annual meeting, which attracted about 100 attendees, 2) the California Association of Sanitation Agencies regulatory workgroup meeting, and 3) a workshop focused on how to use permeable pavement as a stormwater management tool. Weisberg said SCCWRP has been recently invited by several member agencies to give informational presentations, including on marine mammal strandings. Asked by Commissioner Ferrante if SCCWRP coordinates with local marine mammal centers responding to stranding events, Weisberg said yes, and that SCCWRP is also coordinating with NOAA to conduct offshore monitoring of the toxin-producing harmful algal blooms (HABs) that are causing the strandings. Weisberg also said SCCWRP is

working with the State to develop a report card on marine mammal health. Asked by Commissioner Marchese why toxin-producing HAB events have become more frequent and severe, Weisberg said the causes are complex and remain an area of investigation, with contributing factors likely including warmer water temperatures and excess nutrients.

7. CTAG Report

CTAG Chair Lauren Briggs reported that a CTAG subcommittee that has been tasked with developing a scale for assessing readiness of SCCWRP's work for management uses has come up with a new simplified concept, after receiving negative feedback on its original concept. The new readiness scale is focused around time – specifically, quantifying the amount of time that CTAG expects to pass between the completion of a SCCWRP project and when managers should take action based on this work, or when there may be an impact to SCCWRP's member agencies based on this work. Each CTAG member will be queried to specify what they believe this time period to be for individual SCCWRP projects (e.g., 6 months; 1-2 years; 3-5 years); SCCWRP will synthesize the results and highlight any areas of agreement or disagreement among CTAG members. CTAG will pilot the readiness scale next quarter and provide an update at the September 2025 Commission meeting.

Briggs provided an update on the CTAG subcommittee that is providing technical input regarding next steps in SCCWRP's ROMS-BEC modeling work. The subcommittee met twice last quarter and will meet again in June 2025 to review progress on the quality assurance project plan (QAPP) that SCCWRP is developing, as well as SCCWRP's plans for additional modeling analyses.

Briggs provided an update on a joint CTAG-SCCWRP study quantifying the cost of environmental monitoring across the region, which the Commission will hear more about later in the meeting (Agenda Item 12). The project committee is meeting monthly and plans to have a report by August 2025. A second study, focused on contaminants of emerging concern (CECs), will begin after the completion of the first study.

Briggs said CTAG is reviewing an updated draft of SCCWRP's Microbial Water Quality thematic research plan (i.e., 20-pager), and approved SCCWRP moving forward with updating the next 20-pager on Eutrophication in the coming months. Briggs said CTAG reviewed SCCWRP's 2025-2026 Research Plan Executive Summary (Agenda Item 9) and recommends Commission approval.

Briggs said CTAG reviewed three draft fact sheets (HF183, ocean acidification and ecohydrology) and recommends the Commission approve ocean acidification and environmental flows for publication. CTAG and SCCWRP are still working on the HF183 draft fact sheet, which has gone through four versions – a result of a difference of perspective among CTAG members about HF183's management utility. Asked by Commissioner Lindberg to elaborate on the status of the HF183 fact sheet, Executive Director Weisberg said that the multiple iterations on this fact sheet have helped daylight this difference in perspective; SCCWRP is working on a solution. Commissioner Lindberg said his agency finds value in the fact sheets and hopes the HF183 fact sheet will be published. Asked by Commissioners Kozelka about the status of the ecohydrology fact

sheet, Weisberg said a Commissioner identified an item in the fact sheet they would like revised and thus SCCWRP is pulling it from today's Commission agenda (Agenda Item 15).

Briggs said CTAG recommends approval of the two SCCWRP contracts requiring Commission approval (Contracts #1-2, Agenda Item 8).

Briggs said CTAG recommends the Commission hear presentations at future meetings on: 1) a report-out from the CTAG subcommittee providing technical oversight as SCCWRP implements the recommendations from the ROMS-BEC independent review panel, 2) a report-out from the CTAG subcommittee developing the readiness scale, and 3) an update on an ongoing study measuring how much rainfall soaks into the ground vs. runs off the land at turf replacement sites in San Diego County.

8. Contract Review

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) Stormwater Monitoring Coalition (SMC) Eleven Member Agencies (\$866,571)
SMC 2026-2026 Technical Support
- 2) City of Los Angeles (\$460,000)
ddPCR Validation

Commissioner Thompson motioned to approve the two contracts, and Commissioner Sharp seconded the motion. The Commission approved the motion unanimously with Commissioner Kozelka abstaining.

Weisberg presented the remaining four contracts, 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:

- 3) California Marine Sanctuary Foundation (through San Jose State University) (\$50,000)
Monterey Bay Climate Adaptation Regional Monitoring
- 4) Chevron (\$10,000)
Bight'23 Field and Laboratory Services
- 5) Coastal Quest (\$50,000)
Intertidal DNA Library Methods Development
- 6) California Ocean Science Trust (\$100,000)
West Coast Ocean Health Indicator Development

The Commission did not raise any concerns with these contracts.

9. Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Research Plan and Budget

Deputy Director Schiff provided an overview of SCCWRP's 2025-2026 Research Plan Executive Summary, which highlights SCCWRP's planned research directions for the coming year and is supported by a series of eight thematic research plans – each about 20 pages in length that detail SCCWRP's long-term research vision across each of its eight research themes. The Commission approves the Executive Summary each year; CTAG approves the 20-pagers as they are updated on a rolling basis. SCCWRP and CTAG are planning to revisit and update the Stormwater BMPs, Microbial Water Quality and Emerging Contaminants research themes over the next year. Schiff highlighted multiple elements of the new Research Plan Executive Summary, including progress on the 2023 cycle of the Southern California Bight Regional Monitoring Program (Bight '23), investments in ocean modeling based on recommendations from an independent expert panel, structural and non-structural stormwater BMPs (best management practices), regional approaches to advancing ecohydrology science, and joint projects between SCCWRP and CTAG.

Commissioner Sharp motioned to approve the research plan and budget, and Commissioner Searing seconded the motion. The Commission approved the motion unanimously with Commissioner Kozelka abstaining.

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

Executive Director Weisberg reported that SCCWRP's annual salary resolution has been revised to increase salary ranges for all positions by 3.1% to reflect a cost-of-living adjustment. The resolution also includes increasing the minimum salary range for the Post-Doctoral Scientist and Office Manager positions, and adding Business Analyst and Senior Business Analyst job classifications. The Personnel and Finance Committee has reviewed these changes and recommends approval.

Commissioner Thompson motioned to approve the resolution, and Commissioner Ferrante seconded the motion. The Commission approved the motion unanimously with Commissioner Kozelka abstaining.

11. ROMS-BEC Modeling

Executive Director Weisberg began the presentation by explaining that SCCWRP has been working on coastal ocean water-quality modeling for more than 15 years, including spending the past decade developing and validating the ROMS-BEC (Regional Ocean Modeling System-Biogeochemical Elemental Cycling) modeling tools. A few years ago, SCCWRP began using the modeling tools to run bookend scenarios to assess the potential effects of land-based nutrient discharges in Southern California's coastal ocean on ocean acidification and hypoxia. Some members of the stakeholder community expressed concerns about the readiness of the modeling tools for management decision-making. Thus, SCCWRP worked with the National Water Research Institute (NWRI) to convene an independent expert panel to review SCCWRP's modeling work. The expert panel released its final report outlining the panel's findings and recommendations in November 2024.

Weisberg said the expert panel concluded that the modeling work is fundamentally sound and provided 40 recommended next steps to refine the modeling work and build management confidence in the modeling predictions. The steering committee that oversaw the expert panel's formation has been meeting since November 2024 to help the modeling team prioritize the panel's recommendations.

Weisberg said the panel's recommendations fall into four categories: 1) quantify model uncertainty, 2) enhance model and biological interpretation tools, 3) complete next round of model runs, and 4) transition to a community model. Weisberg said the modeling team plans to first improve understanding of model performance and refine the modeling tools, then pursue additional model applications and train others to use the model. He outlined SCCWRP's proposed plan for addressing the expert panel's recommendations as informed by the steering committee's priorities. To solicit each steering committee member's priorities, steering committee members received 100 points each to allocate across the panel's four categories of recommendations. While regulated parties put most of their points into doing additional uncertainty analyses, regulators put most of their points into running additional model scenarios. However, all members of the steering committee agreed to prioritize the following three recommendations: 1) conduct a model run to assess how alternative global emission scenarios affect influence of local nutrient inputs, 2) provide more spatial context when presenting modeling runs, including future anticipated changes to Marine Protected Areas, and 3) improve the tools used to disseminate and visualize the data.

Weisberg noted that SCCWRP's plan also involves working with CTAG and the original expert panel. CTAG serves a technical review capacity to ensure that work prioritized by the steering committee, as well as other modeling projects that SCCWRP takes on, are done in a technically sound manner. SCCWRP has already begun working with CTAG to develop the quality assurance project plan (QAPP) and pursue alternative global emission model runs. Weisberg proposed having the independent expert panel reconvene in two years to evaluate SCCWRP's progress in addressing the overall set of recommendations.

Asked by Commission Chair DeBaal about the estimated cost of implementing all of the recommendations, Weisberg said it will cost around \$5 million in total. Asked by Commissioner Marchese how other models that feed into the ROMS-BEC modeling tools get updated, Department Head Sutula said a community of ocean modelers is proactively and continuously working to ensure all of the tools are updated and operating correctly. Asked by Commissioner Lindberg why SCCWRP didn't chose to initially run more realistic model scenarios, Weisberg said bookend scenarios are how the modeling analyses start to determine whether there is enough effect that more scenarios are warranted. Asked by Commissioner Thompson about the relatively small amount of monitoring data that are currently available for an area of the coastal ocean near Catalina Island, Sutula said the modeling data that are available for this region reflect generally strong agreement between what is predicted vs. observed; that said, Sutula agreed the area could benefit from additional monitoring data. Asked by Commissioner Kozelka about the status of adapting the modeling tools to predict harmful algal blooms (HABs) in the coastal ocean, Weisberg

said SCCWRP's current priority is ocean acidification and hypoxia, while SCCWRP's partners are focusing on HABs modeling.

Commissioners discussed the readiness of the modeling tools for studying the influence of individual outfalls on coastal ocean health. Commissioner Thompson noted that while the modeling tools are fundamentally sound as regional models, additional modeling work is needed to give his agency confidence that a specific outfall's discharges are responsible for a change in coastal ocean health. Commissioner Eckerle urged Commissioners to make the distinction between what modeling work is still needed vs. what work would be nice to have. Commissioner Wiborg, who is a member of the steering committee, noted that the QAPP and planned modeling analyses will help move the modeling tools closer to being ready for outfall-specific analyses.

Commissioners discussed the timing of when to reconvene the independent expert panel to review the modeling team's progress. Commissioner Thompson said he is in favor of reconvening the expert panel in the short term, to ensure that the planned next steps are the correct ones and are being implemented correctly. Commissioner Eckerle expressed concerns that reconvening the expert panel now will slow down the overall timeline of implementing the recommendations. The Commission agreed that reconvening the panel sooner than later would be helpful, as long as it does not delay the overall process.

The Commission accepted a public comment from Tracy Quinn from Heal the Bay. Quinn thanked the Commission for their engagement with the modeling work and their responsiveness to the expert panel's recommendations. She asked that nonprofits like Heal the Bay be invited into the conversation to help shape future directions for the modeling work.

12. Cost of Monitoring

Deputy Director Schiff began the presentation by explaining that ocean monitoring in Southern California is important, but that it is also expensive, and that Southern California conducts more ocean monitoring than most other regions in the United States. The last study quantifying the cost of ocean monitoring across the region, which was done by SCCWRP in 1997, found that Southern California entities spent about \$31 million annually on ocean monitoring, with 70% of sampling data collected by agencies with NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permits. Earlier this year, SCCWRP and CTAG begun working on a joint study to quantify: (1) the effort and cost associated with ocean monitoring in Southern California, (2) how monitoring effort and cost vary across different habitats, indicators and agencies, and (3) how monitoring effort and cost compare to 25 years ago. The study focused on long-term monitoring programs that are expected to last at least 10 years and were active between 2021-2023. Researchers found that Southern California agencies spent an estimated \$186.7 million and collected 896,527 samples in 2022. When adjusted for inflation, agencies in 1997 spent an estimated \$55 million on ocean monitoring and collected 244,911 samples. Compared to 1997, Southern California agencies are spending more than triple the amount on ocean monitoring and collecting more than triple the number of samples, especially bacteria samples, largely due to 1997 State legislation mandating weekly beach monitoring. Despite the increase in

sampling, the number of monitoring agencies decreased from 115 to 59, due in part to decommissioning of power stations and a decline in industrial discharges.

Asked by Commissioner Marchese about how transitioning to rapid DNA-based beach water quality testing methods will affect sampling volumes, Schiff said the number of samples is not expected to change, but rather how those samples are processed.

Commissioner Searing added that the new methods have increased monitoring cost and sampling frequency. Asked by Commissioner Ferrante about duplication of sampling effort among agencies, Schiff said it would be interesting to explore sampling patterns among agencies that collected samples from sites near one other, but that was not part of the present study. Asked by Commissioner Kozelka about the contribution of TMDLs in driving an increase in the amount of sampling, Schiff said TMDLs have primarily increased monitoring requirements for stormwater agencies, as well as boat and shipyards. Commissioner Kozelka suggested adding a section about the benefits of monitoring when the project's final report is drafted.

Commissioners agreed on the need to leverage the data to explore ways to streamline monitoring efforts, and to redirect resources to maximize the insights that can be generated from monitoring. Commissioners also suggested follow-up analyses, including comparing costs among individual agencies and quantifying costs borne by individual agencies relative to their discharge volume.

13. DDT

Department Head Wong began the presentation by explaining that Southern California has been studying levels of DDT at two locations where the now-banned pesticide has been found: the Palos Verdes Superfund site and deep-ocean dump sites between the mainland and Catalina Island. While the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency already has taken interim remedial management actions for the Palos Verdes Superfund site, researchers are still in the early stages of understanding where and how much DDT is at Southern California's deep ocean sites, as well as how it may be spreading and exerting adverse ecological effects. Recent studies by Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UC Santa Barbara, and USC are focused on characterizing DDT at these dump sites. These studies have found that peak concentrations of DDT are buried at 4-6 cm depths under cleaner sediment. The concentrations exceed the maximum concentrations observed during Bight '18. One key question researchers are asking is whether the DDT found at the dump sites originated at the Palos Verdes Superfund site or was dumped directly at the offshore dump sites. Studies to date have found that DDT is likely from offshore dumping. Next steps include assessing ecosystem and human health effects, as well as evaluating potential remediation options.

Amalia Almada, Extension Program Leader at USC Sea Grant, was invited to give a short presentation explaining how SCCWRP's work fits into Southern California's regional DDT research portfolio. She said USC Sea Grant and California Sea Grant developed a framework in 2022-2023 to guide future investments in deep ocean DDT research. From the research framework flowed 13 research projects – mostly intended to improve understanding the fate, transport and biological effects of DDT. Sea Grant, as coordinator of this work, has prioritized making the findings publicly accessible and engaging stakeholders.

Commissioner Ferrante commented that the ecological impacts of DDT in Palos Verdes shelf sediment have not lessened as rapidly as initially projected, leading to conversations about potentially taking remedial action to cap hotspot areas. Asked by Commissioner Lindberg if DDT monitoring includes tracking natural chemical breakdown and sediment deposition that covers contaminated layers, Wong said yes. Asked by Commissioner Marchese if the dumping was limited to DDT, Wong said no, as researchers have found evidence of other types of dumping, including potential radioactive waste. Commissioner Ferrante commented on the similarities between DDT and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), noting that both contaminants were in widespread use, became persistent in the environment, and are now having lasting ecological consequences; he emphasized the need to learn from past mistakes.

14. Communications Plan

Communications Director Martindale began the presentation by explaining that the Commission reviewed a draft of SCCWRP's communications strategy at its last strategic planning meeting in 2023. The Commission expressed support at the time for the strategy's fundamentals, but delayed formally adopting the strategy and instead requested that SCCWRP prioritize other recommendations from the strategic planning meeting first. SCCWRP's communications strategy consists of three main pillars: (1) Build consensus among researchers and stakeholders on the readiness of SCCWRP's science for management use, (2) communicate science through an audience targeting strategy, and (3) develop brand ambassadors – Commissioners, CTAG representatives, and staff – who can optimally help SCCWRP achieve its mission when they are properly supported and empowered. Martindale focused on describing SCCWRP's audience targeting strategy (Pillar 2), explaining that instead of communicating with general audiences, SCCWRP prioritizes about 400 people that have been hand-selected as high-value targets. Audience targeting is consequential for how SCCWRP communicates, as SCCWRP must tailor its communications to optimally resonate with specific target audiences, and then on the backend, monitor the level of satisfaction and engagement of these groups. SCCWRP's newest approach to measuring its effectiveness at reaching its target audiences is to track email open rates for key SCCWRP communications.

Commissioners expressed support for Pillar 1 and 2, but questioned the concept of brand ambassadors in Pillar 3. Commissioners commented that the term "brand ambassadors" sounds too corporate, and asked about the necessity of SCCWRP having brand ambassadors, given that SCCWRP's science and expertise should speak for itself. Executive Director Weisberg said that the term can easily be changed, but that the concept behind Pillar 3 is important: Because the Commission, CTAG and staff play key roles in helping to advance SCCWRP's mission, these groups need to develop a common understanding of SCCWRP's goals, priorities and approaches. Commissioner Thompson requested that the strategy be more explicit about the process SCCWRP uses to iteratively build consensus as science advances, and pointed to the ROMS-BEC modeling work as a good example. Commissioner Crader echoed Thompson's comments, suggesting the addition of milestones and touchpoints. Asked by Commission Chair DeBaal about how SCCWRP decides what science to codify into published manuscripts, Weisberg said staff are encouraged to publish

all of their work. To decide which projects should be the focus of updates in the SCCWRP Director's Report newsletter, Martindale said that topics are selected by popular vote through a strategic planning process known as a pitch meeting, during which staff pitch their best ideas and then a vote is taken to decide which pitches should become articles.

Martindale said SCCWRP will revise the communications strategy and bring it back to the Commission at a future meeting.

15. Fact Sheets

Communications Director Martindale reminded the Commission that SCCWRP is producing a series of two-page education fact sheets that are intended for Commissioners to be able to hand to their board members, executive management and similar audiences. Since 2022, SCCWRP has published eight fact sheets based on topics prioritized by the Commission. Martindale introduced the next fact sheet on ocean acidification and explained that CTAG has reviewed and recommended approval. He said SCCWRP is pulling the ecohydrology fact sheet today at a Commissioner's request; it will be brought back to the Commission for approval in September 2025. SCCWRP is still working with CTAG on the HF183 fact sheet. Martindale said the next fact sheet will be on coastal resiliency, and asked the Commission to confirm that SCCWRP should move forward with this topic.

Asked by Commissioner Walsh if SCCWRP has any insights into how fact sheets are used by the Commission, Martindale said all feedback has been anecdotal, but SCCWRP will be able to measure how many Commissioners open future fact sheets as a result of investing in email tracking software. Commissioners discussed the value of the fact sheets.

Commissioners Crader and Lindberg said they appreciate the fact sheets and support SCCWRP continuing to produce them. Commissioner Ferrante said although the fact sheets are well-written, they are not written at the right level for his agency's board of directors. Commissioner Thompson echoed this and said that from his agency's perspective, the fact sheets require a large amount of work relative to their value. Commissioner Marchese agreed, noting that the fact sheets have a lot of information that a reader who is familiar with the topic can easily pick up, but may be harder for a casual reader to understand. Executive Director Weisberg said the fact sheets are written to explain a topic to a board member who may not have a technical background in science; the fact sheet is intended to supplement in-person conversations between a Commissioner and their board member on these topics. Weisberg said if the fact sheets are currently not written at the right level for this audience, SCCWRP staff should reevaluate them. The Commission agreed to further discuss the SCCWRP fact sheet series at the September 2025 meeting.

Commissioner Thompson motioned to approve the two fact sheets, and Commissioner Ferrante seconded the motion. The Commission approved the motion unanimously, with Commissioner Kozelka abstaining.

16. Other Business and Communications

None

17. Public Comments

None

18. Future Meeting Agenda Items

Executive Director Weisberg said the Commission will revisit SCCWRP's communications strategy and fact sheet series at its September 2025 meeting. He also said SCCWRP will provide an update on the ROMS-BEC modeling work. Commission Chair DeBaal suggested that the Commission hear another update on the cost of monitoring project that SCCWRP and CTAG are jointly pursuing.

19. Adjournment

Commission Chair DeBaal adjourned the meeting at 1:58 PM until the next Commission meeting on September 5, 2025 at 9:00 AM.

Attest:

Bryan Nece
Secretary