

# **Commission's Technical Advisory Group (CTAG)**

May 2024 Meeting Summary

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## CTAG Management Team

**Vice Chair**

Lauren Briggs

**Chair**

Ryan Kempster

**Past Chair**

David Laak



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## New CTAG Member(s)

**CTAG Alternate**

Katherine Faick



<https://www.sccwrp.org/about/governance/ctag/>

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## CTAG Meeting Logistics

- In person vs. remote:
  - *CTAG not required to meet in person.*
  - *CTAG preferencing in person, with remote option.*
    - *For reference, 13 of 14 CTAG members attended May meeting in person, with one member attending remotely.*

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## One (1) Contract Requiring Commission Approval

**Contract Title:** Development of a coastal wetland functional assessment dashboard and toolkit to support project prioritization and evaluation.

**Funding Agency & Amount:** USEPA - \$479,773

**Relationship to CTAG-approved research plan:** Relevant to Bioassessment, Regional Monitoring, and Climate Resiliency themes.

**Project Description:** Supports continued development of statewide estuary monitoring program.



# Fact Sheet Review

## PFAS

- *SCCWRP incorporated additional CTAG comments after discussion at Feb and May meetings.*
- *Concerns were raised regarding inclusion of newly available information.*
- **Members had opportunity to hold item for further review by providing comments by May 23<sup>rd</sup>.**
- **Only minor comments received.**

Microplastic Factsheet currently under review  
Next fact sheet topic – HF183

**SCCWRP FACT SHEET** DRAFT to be distributed for external review following Commission review

## Managing PFAS in California's aquatic systems

*As understanding of the ecological and health consequences of PFAS exposure grows, environmental managers will be poised to take more aggressive actions to protect humans and wildlife*

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Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) are a ubiquitous class of synthetic chemicals used in a wide range of consumer and industrial products, from non-stick cookware to water-repellent clothing to firefighting foam. Often referred to as "forever chemicals," PFAS are known for their durability and resistance to heat, water, and oil – and also their resistance to breakdown in the environment.

Because PFAS have been linked to harmful effects in humans and wildlife, the environmental management community is prioritizing building capacity to:

- » Monitor PFAS in diverse aquatic systems
- » Remove elevated levels of PFAS to reduce risk of exposure
- » Take source-control actions that reduce the spread of PFAS, including by placing bans on manufacture and use

**PFAS sources**

A wide range of consumer and industrial products are made with PFAS.

### How PFAS enter the environment

The thousands of chemicals that make up PFAS enter the environment in places where the chemicals are produced, and where products containing PFAS are used, cleaned, and disposed of. Once PFAS enter the environment, they can be transported long distances by wind and water. When PFAS are inadvertently ingested and absorbed by organisms, they can build up, or bioaccumulate, in each successive predator that consumes its prey – exposing humans and other wildlife at the top of food webs to potentially hazardous PFAS levels.

### How PFAS emerged as a contaminant of concern

Originally developed in the 1940s, PFAS did not emerge as a public health concern until the 1990s, following decades of scientific study. Since that time, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and other regulatory agencies have been building a scientific foundation for expanding monitoring of PFAS and for taking increasingly aggressive source-control actions to limit the manufacture and use of PFAS.

In California, PFAS were identified in 2012 as a priority pollutant by the Science Advisory Panel for Constituents of Emerging Concern (CECs) in California's Aquatic Ecosystems, which was convened to help the State prioritize managing CECs in aquatic environments.

### Health effects of PFAS exposure

Although knowledge about the effects of exposure to PFAS on humans and aquatic life is still growing, early evidence indicates that exposure is associated with adverse health outcomes:

- » In humans, PFAS have been linked to increased risks of cancer, reproductive and development effects, and hormone imbalances.
- » In aquatic life, PFAS are suspected to have effects on growth and reproduction, although data are limited and inconsistent.

### How PFAS are removed from water

PFAS are most commonly removed from water via special filters optimized to adsorb multiple PFAS compounds. The filters are then sent to landfills or incinerated. However, research is ongoing to identify more cost-effective, environmentally friendly ways to destroy PFAS, including electrochemical and photochemical techniques, ultraviolet light, and potential breakdown by microorganisms.

UC Riverside researchers are studying soil bacteria for their potential to break down PFAS.

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## Climate Change Intersessional

CTAG discussed the outcomes of the climate change intersessional.

Discussion about the appropriateness of this theme resulted in alternative options being presented, including:

- (1) Keep climate change as stand alone theme
- (2) Remove climate change – absorb into other themes
- (3) Create a new climate resiliency theme

**CTAG were emailed to comment on the Climate Resiliency Plan by May 23<sup>rd</sup>  
Only minor revisions were received.**



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## CTAG Operating Procedures

CTAG discussed the process for reviewing SCCWRP documents.

- Primary outcome - Manuscript review is offered but NOT required.
- Josh Westfall to work with Steve W to develop a new document review process to assist members in providing helpful comments.
- However, members are encouraged to follow their own internal process to facilitate review of documents that are of importance to their agency.



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## CTAG/SCCWRP Projects

CTAG were asked to consider the following project requests:

1. SCCWRP would like to participate with CTAG members on a joint project
2. SCCWRP would also like to pursue an AI (Artificial Intelligence) focused project.

**CTAG members were asked to submit ideas on both items by May 31<sup>st</sup>.  
Few responses have been received.**

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## Agenda Items for Future Meetings

1. Ken Schiff and Ryan Kempster will present to CTAG the outcome of the project submission request for review.
2. Presentation on the findings of the IRP and discussion on next steps.
3. Update on the new climate resiliency research theme.
4. SCCWRP to present a primer on AI for science – future applications and potential.