

Dec 2025

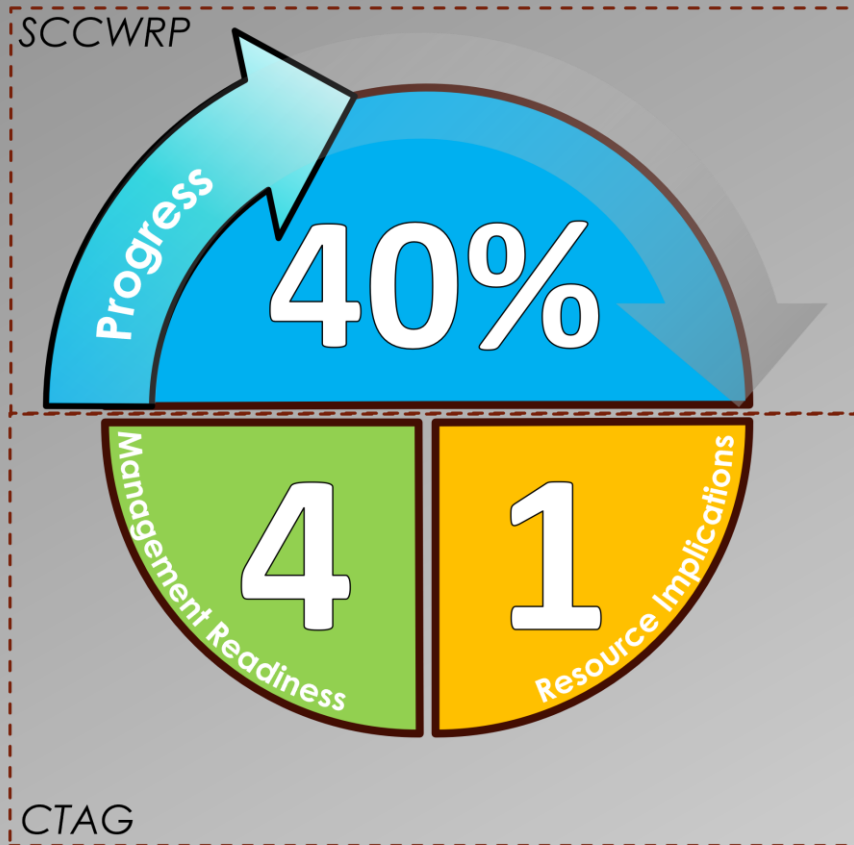
Subcommittee on Scientific Readiness

Review of Progress and Discussion of Next Steps

Subcommittee Members: Ryan Kempster; Grant Sharp,
Lauren Briggs, and Josh Westfall

Subcommittee on Scientific Readiness

Readiness Scale Version 1



Readiness Scale Version 2

Project/Topic: ROMS-BEC Model

Management Question: Can the model be used to establish nutrient limitations for ocean dischargers, and if so when?



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Recap

Oct 2023

SCCWRP Strategic Management Meeting

Commissioners discussed giving **CTAG a more proactive role** in helping to prepare management for policy-focused discussions.

June 2024

Commission Meeting

Commissioners further discussed the need to **differentiate CTAG (technical) and Commission (policy) meetings**.

CTAG needs to understand that they have responsibility to ensure technical adequacy of the work.

Sep 2024

Commission Meeting

CTAG Subcommittee formed to assess how CTAG can provide appropriate technical perspective so that Commissioners can make informed policy decisions.

Dec 2024

Commission Meeting

CTAG Subcommittee proposes the **first iteration of the Readiness Scale** including multiple factors: Scientific, Management, and Resource Impact.

Commissioner's response was positive, but CTAG ultimately rejected the idea due to complexity.

May 2025

CTAG Meeting

CTAG Subcommittee proposed a more **simplified version of the Readiness Scale** focusing on specific management questions and the impact to agencies on a time scale.

CTAG's response was positive, but Commissioner's rejected it as it didn't ask the right questions or provide the appropriate scientific assessment.

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CTAG/Commission Meeting Oct 28, 2025

- Discuss what is most important to the commission
(science, policy, cost impact, CTAG review, CTAG discussion...)
- Discuss challenges for CTAG to meet Commission expectations
(workload, adequate SME, CTAG is technical not policy focused)
- Develop a solution that works for both groups
(simple but useful)

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Outcome of CTAG/Commission Meeting

CTAG Comments:

- Readiness means something different to everyone
- CTAG are technical advisors not policy makers
- Developing and maintaining metrics is time consuming
- Lack of Commission direction
- The focus should be on facilitating CTAG discussion
- CTAG members should be ensuring that their Commissioners are updated on items of concern

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Outcome of CTAG/Commission Meeting

Commissioner Comments:

- Commissioners want to hear from CTAG
- Readiness discussions should not become a purgatory for the more contentious matters (eg HF183 fact Sheet)
- Disagreements should not mean never ready but rather this communication can be helpful for their discussions
- Having information presented by CTAG alongside SCCWRP projects would be helpful
- A quantitative metric is not necessarily required to support readiness
 - Rather, a qualitative review of CTAG sentiment would likely be more useful
 - For example, a pro/con (or majority/minority) opinion summary of CTAG discussion would be helpful

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New Approach to Readiness Assessment

1. Facilitate Discussion:

- Importantly, we need to facilitate effective discussion among CTAG members to ensure that the Commission understands CTAG's technical position on a project.
 - Therefore, on projects of particular interest, SCCWRP will help to facilitate CTAG discussion by posing relevant management questions, which may be provided in the CTAG agenda to give members time to consider the items before the meeting and invite appropriate SME's to the discussion.



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New Approach to Readiness Assessment

2. Focus on a Qualitative Assessment:

- CTAG will focus on facilitating effective discussions and providing a qualitative summary of project discussions to the Commission.
 - This summary may focus on discoveries/outcomes of the project, applications of the research, potential management questions, or other pertinent information that CTAG sees as relevant for the commission.
 - This summary will be recorded in the CTAG minutes and open for CTAG input during minutes review.
 - The summary will subsequently be provided in the Commission Agenda alongside the relevant SCCWRP project to offer the CTAG technical perspective to Commissioners.



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New Approach to Readiness Assessment

Example Readiness Summary for Artificial Intelligence Project:

CTAG was provided an update on SCCWRP’s efforts to evaluate the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to assist in identifying and counting fish, as a possible replacement or supplement for trawls. CTAG broadly agreed that there is value in pursuing the possibility of using AI (and other technologies such as eDNA) as a potential alternative or supplement to trawling. CTAG members who weighed in on the discussion (both regulated and regulatory) expressed value in pursuing an alternative to trawling through these technologies. As a result, CTAG agreed to form a subcommittee to further evaluate possible alternatives to trawling. No opposition or pushback was expressed by any CTAG member.

NOTICE AND AGENDA
Regular Meeting

Commission of
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COASTAL WATER RESEARCH PROJECT AUTHORITY

To Be Held
Friday, December 5, 2025
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

At the Offices of the Authority:
3535 Harbor Blvd. Costa Mesa, California 92626

REGULAR AGENDA

5. **PERSONNEL AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT 9:10**
The Commission will hear a report from their Personnel and Finance Committee.

6. **FINANCIAL AUDIT 9:15**
The Commission will receive and file the auditor's financial report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025.

7. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT 9:20**
The Executive Director will report on current activities of the Authority.

8. **CTAG REPORT 9:40**
The Chair of the Commission's Technical Advisory Group (CTAG) will report on their last meeting.
[CTAG Minutes Linked here](#)

9. **CONTRACT REVIEW 10:00**
The Executive Director will seek the Commission's endorsement of contracts that have been, or will be offered, to the Authority. In preparation for that, the Commission will hear presentations about new projects that CTAG considers a new direction for the organization or have important management implications.

10. **HABS MODELING 10:15**
Martha Sufala will describe how the ROMS-BEC modeling is being adapted to quantify factors affecting harmful algal blooms.

11. **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR FISH IDENTIFICATION 10:45**
Steve Weisberg will describe progress in developing artificial intelligence as a means for quantifying fish abundance.

Readiness Summary for Artificial Intelligence Project:
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12. **BIGHT UPDATE 11:15**
Ken Schiff will describe present status of the Bight23 Regional Monitoring Project.

LUNCH 12:00

13. **READINESS ASSESSMENT 1:00**
CTAG will present a proposal for how they will address the Commission request for assigning an adoption readiness level to each of the projects that SCCWRP staff presents.

14. **CTAG OPERATING GUIDELINES 1:20**
The Commission will hear from legal counsel about flexibilities and mandates regarding CTAG operating procedures. The Commission will then develop guidance regarding CTAG voting procedures.

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Next Steps

- **Does the Commission approve this new approach to readiness?**
- If approved today, CTAG will trial this approach at the Feb meeting, and your March agenda will then include relevant readiness summaries going forward