



Meeting Minutes

Meeting of the California Water Commission
Wednesday, November 20, 2019
State of California, Resources Building
1416 Ninth Street, First Floor Auditorium
Sacramento, CA 95814
Beginning at 9:30 a.m.

1. Call to Order

Chairman Quintero called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m.

2. Roll Call

Executive Secretary Kimberly Muljat called the roll. Commission members Teresa Alvarado, Andy Ball, Maria Herrera, Armando Quintero, and Matt Swanson were present, constituting a quorum. Commissioners Carol Baker and Danny Curtin were absent.

3. Closed Session

The Commission did not hold a closed session.

4. Approval of September 18, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Alvarado moved to approve the September 18, 2019 meeting minutes. All Commissioners present voted in favor.

5. Executive Officer's Report

Executive Officer Joe Yun reported he attended the Flood-MAR Open Forum at the end of October. At its June meeting, the Commission directed staff to draft and release regulations documenting the process being used for determining consistency with Proposition 1 for Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act funding. The regulations were posted online for public comment on November 1, 2019, and will be brought back in December for adoption.

6. Commission Member Reports

Commissioner Herrera attended the Flood-MAR Open Forum. Commissioner Alvarado had lunch with Department of Water Resources (DWR) Director Karla Nemeth, attended the San Jose Water Company's Annual Leadership Barbecue, and had coffee with Santa Clara Valley Water District Director Linda LeZotte. Commissioner Quintero attended the Flood-MAR Open Forum and a two-day convening of the California Landscape Network.

7. Public Testimony

There was no public testimony.

8. Action Item: Proposed South-North Intertie Pipeline Phase II Project Consistency with Proposition 1

Dwayne Chisam, General Manager of Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency (AVEK), provided information on the proposed South-North Intertie Pipeline (SNIP) Phase II Project and requested the Commission find the project consistent with Proposition 1 for the purpose of federal WIIN Act eligibility requirements. A finding of consistency would allow AVEK to seek WIIN Act funding for project costs. Mr. Chisam explained the proposed project's benefits and how it is consistent with Proposition 1, including: leveraging local investment, reducing reliance on the Delta, and preparing the region for climate change.

Commissioner Ball asked about possible impacts to the Delta. Mr. Chisam replied that during times of shortage, AVEK would not have a significant need for water from the Delta and thereby reduce pumping. Commissioner Alvarado asked about the subsurface structure related to Semitropic Water Bank in Kern County. Mr. Chisam stated the Tehachapi Mountains separate the two. Commissioner Swanson inquired about the proposed timeline of the project. Mr. Chisam responded the SNIP Phase II is projected to be completed by 2022.

Commissioner Ball moved to find the SNIP Phase II Project consistent with Proposition 1. Commissioner Swanson seconded the motion. All Commissioners present voted in favor.

9. Strategic Plan

Executive Officer Joe Yun provided a brief overview of the Strategic Plan, including its five goals and related objectives. Mr. Yun pointed out that the Strategic Plan may need to be revised to reflect the content of the Governor's anticipated Water Portfolio. Goal 1 is for the Commission to consider whether to reactivate its statutory role in advocating for federal flood control funding. Goal 2 aims to use the Commission as a primary public forum to address multiple statewide issues in water management. The Commission briefly discussed interpretations of the Strategic Plan and the Commission's roles. Goal 3 examines responsibilities and processes associated with the State Water Project. Goal 4 covers statutory authorities associated with DWR, including approving regulations and eminent domain proceedings. Goal 5 pertains to statutory responsibilities related to the Water Storage Investment Program (WSIP).

The Commission took public comment. Deirdre Des Jardins, with California Water Research, supported the Commission waiting to adopt a final draft and provided specific comments on several elements of the plan, including issues related to the Delta. Marguerite Patil, with Contra Costa Water District, stated any additional support the Commission can provide to WSIP projects seeking WIIN Act funding would be helpful.

10. Division of Multi-Benefit Initiatives

Kris Tjernell, DWR Deputy Director for Integrated Watershed Management, briefed the Commission on DWR's new Division of Multi-Benefit Initiatives. The new division includes three offices, which Mr. Tjernell described while highlighting vacant positions. Mr. Tjernell highlighted three projects as examples of the division's work. The Lookout Slough Project is a tidal restoration project in the Yolo Bypass that provides both flood control and ecosystem benefits. Subsidence reversal projects on Sherman and Twitchell Islands provide flood control benefits, help respond to climate change, and stimulate the economy. The Lower Elkhorn Levee Setback

project aims to add approximately 900 acres to the Yolo Bypass for flood control and ecosystem benefits.

Commissioner Ball asked about funding for these projects and if DWR is utilizing eminent domain. Mr. Tjernell stated that funding sources include the State Water Contractors, Proposition 68, and Proposition 1E. DWR has primarily utilized fee title acquisitions to perform full land conversions, but has initiated eminent domain proceedings for several properties.

The Commission took public comment. Deirdre Des Jardins, with California Water Research, discussed Delta islands that will be more vulnerable to flood with sea level rise and the need to prioritize protecting lives and property.

11. State Water Project Update

Behzad Soltanzadeh, Assistant Division Chief of DWR's Division of Operations and Maintenance, briefed the Commission on State Water Project (SWP) infrastructure investigations and construction efforts. Mr. Soltanzadeh provided information about nine projects across the SWP, including refurbishment of several power generation and pumping facilities, repairs to the California Aqueduct, investigations and improvements to spillways, the SWP Fire Modernization Project, and the SWP Pipeline Condition Assessment Project.

Commissioner Ball asked about approximate total costs of the construction. Mr. Soltanzadeh stated projects are planned and budgeted for and estimated each project's cost. Commissioner Alvarado inquired about ongoing maintenance needs and the age of assets. Mr. Soltanzadeh responded that DWR performs preventative maintenance, performs regular monitoring, and prioritizes maintenance projects. The approximate age of SWP assets is 50 years; many of the projects discussed are designed to extend their life by 50 to 100 years. Commissioner Quintero inquired about power demand versus power generation. Tio Zasso, with DWR, stated that it depends on hydrology, but the SWP generates approximately 60% of its own power needs.

12. Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Update

Taryn Ravazzini, DWR Deputy Director for Statewide Groundwater Management, provided an update on DWR's implementation of SGMA. Ms. Ravazzini summarized California's groundwater management history and major milestones completed for SGMA. DWR's recent milestones include completing a second round of basin boundary modifications and evaluating alternatives to Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs). The new GSP Reporting System was developed to provide a place for GSPs and public comments to be submitted and viewed. DWR offers technical assistance, planning assistance, and financial assistance to local agencies implementing SGMA. Ms. Ravazzini discussed each form of assistance, highlighting Facilitation Support Services and new written translation services. Upcoming activities include submission of GSPs for critically overdrafted basins by January 31, 2020, and outreach and engagement from DWR to GSAs.

Commissioner Ball asked when critically overdrafted basins are required to be sustainable. Ms. Ravazzini said SGMA established a 20-year timeframe. Commissioner Alvarado asked how the Commission can help engage the public. Ms. Ravazzini discussed outreach opportunities. Commissioner Herrera discussed the need for DWR's new translation services and encouraged DWR to ensure that GSPs properly consider the Human Right to Water. Commissioner Swanson highlighted the importance of data in SGMA implementation. Commissioner Herrera asked how

DWR plans to integrate the AB 1668 drought contingency planning recommendations with the SGMA process. Ms. Ravazzini replied that her staff is working with other programs and agencies, including DWR's drought programs, to ensure a comprehensive approach by the State.

The Commission took public comment. Deirdre Des Jardins, with California Water Research, stated that local farmworkers may be intimidated by participating in SGMA processes. She added that some draft GSPs appear to overestimate groundwater recharge rates. Robert Gore, with the Gualco Group on behalf of multiple agencies, stated that major water users in the Central Valley are aware of the need for drinking water, expressed concern regarding data not being available in the form of sophisticated analytics, and suggested DWR should work with the Department of Conservation on land use for agriculture.

13. Consideration of Items for Next California Water Commission Meeting

Agenda items at the next meeting will include consideration of the Commission's proposed regulations for making WIIN Act determinations, a briefing on the joint operations of the State and Federal water projects, a briefing from the Public Policy Institute of California on their recent report on priorities for California's water, consideration of the Commission's Strategic Plan, and a briefing on the 2017 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan.

14. Adjourn

The Commission adjourned at 12:51 pm.