

# Safe, Clean Water Program

## Central Santa Monica Bay

### Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)

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#### **Meeting Minutes:**

Monday, May 3, 2021  
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM  
WebEx Meeting

#### **Attendees**

##### Committee Members Present:

Cung Nguyen (LACFCD)	Josette Descalzo (Beverly Hills)
E.J. Caldwell (West Basin MWD)	Charles Herbertson (Culver City)
Art Castro* (LADWP)	Roberto Perez (Los Angeles)
Sheila Brice (Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation)	Rafael Prieto (Los Angeles)
Darryl Ford* (LADRP)	Susie Santilena* (Los Angeles)
Rita Kampalath (LA County CSO)	Bruce Hamamoto (LA County Public Works)
Alysen Weiland* (PSOMAS)	Curtis Castle (Santa Monica)
Bruce Reznik (LA Waterkeeper)	Gloria Walton (The Solutions Project/SCOPE)

##### Committee Members Not Present:

\*Committee Member Alternate

See attached roll call sheet for the full list of attendees.

#### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Charles Herbertson, the Vice Chair of the Central Santa Monica Bay WASC, welcomed the WASC and called the meeting to order.

Kirk Allen (District) discussed WebEx features and facilitated the roll call. WASC made self-introductions and a quorum was established.

#### **2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 5, 2021**

April 5, 2021 minutes not yet ready to be approved today.

#### **3. Public Comment Period**

Nichole Heil, research analyst for LA Alliance for a New Economy and member of OurWaterLA recommended that no funding be allocated to the Regional Pathogen Study out of concern for the proposal's legitimacy, as no science professionals were involved in the development of the study, which is a requirement under the Scientific Studies Program. Ms. Heil also extended support for the Slauson Connect Project.

Shahriar Eftekharzadeh (SEITec) submitted a Public Comment Form (see attached), asking the WASC to explain its unanimous support for a pump station project, as opposed to SEITec's gravity diversion treatment project, that will be much more expensive and detrimental to the environment.

Tiffany Wong (SCOPE / OurWaterLA) asked the WASC to consider projects that thoroughly demonstrate strong engagement plans, have a strong investment element, and are in the community.

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David McNeil (Baldwin Hills Conservancy) expressed his support for the Ballona Creek LASAN project and the Cal Greenworks Projects. Also, he extended support for the Slauson Connect project.

#### **4. Committee Member and District Updates**

Kirk Allen provided the District updates, noting:

- Fund Transfer Agreements (TAs) have been executed for all Municipalities in the Central Santa Monica Bay watershed, and local returns have been released.
- Cities should have all received their 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Payment. Next step is to prepare and submit the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Plans. Second Annual Payment is expected to be available in August.
- Watershed Coordinators: 7 of 12 WCs have executed contracts.
- Technical Resources Program (TRP): The consultant Woodard & Curran, tasked with preparing a TRP Feasibility Study in Central Santa Monica Bay, has been issued a Notice to Proceed.
- LA County Flood Control District and local sewer sanitation agency conceptual plan approval is required where appropriate and must be submitted two months in advance of project deadlines.
- Tax Relief Applications were due May 1 for Low-Income Senior-Owned (LISO) properties as well as General Income-Based Tax Reduction (GIBTR) qualifying homeowners.
- All WASCs are encouraged to finish their respective SIPs as soon as possible.
- Project applicants will speak today on behalf of the LA Unified School District (LAUSD).

#### **5. Watershed Coordinator Updates:**

Mikaela Randolph (Heal the Bay) informed the WASC that their Work Plan has been submitted for review and approval. Michelle Struthers of Steve Groner & Associates, who's working alongside Mikaela Randolph, commented that they have a contract officially in place.

#### **6. Discussion Items:**

##### **a) Ex Parte Communication Disclosure**

Bruce Reznik noted that he participated in OurWaterLA conversations but recused himself from project recommendations, such as those that Nichole Heil and Tiffany Wong mentioned earlier in the meeting.

Charles Herbertson noted that the Culver City staff met with Cal Greenworks last month to discuss their projects and the potential for coordinating with the City in the future.

##### **b) Summary of Scientific Studies from the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP)**

Both studies, the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study and Fecal Source Markers and Pathogens in Ballona Creek, that have requested funding have been evaluated by SCCWRP; 2–3-page study summaries prepared by SCCWRP have been shared with the WASC. Charles Herbertson opened the discussion on whether these studies should be recommended for funding in the current cycle.

Bruce Reznik commented that he is not inclined to support either project.

Josette Descalzo commented that he does not have a concern with funding both projects.

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Richard Watson clarified that they are requesting year one funding (totaling \$45,659) for the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study. He mentioned the lack of detail in the proposal was intentional so as not to risk alienating the technical experts and the people that they want to have on the stakeholder committee.

Josette Descalzo asked Richard Watson if they're comfortable with the risk they're taking by going for year one funding when next year's funding might change and be unavailable. Richard Watson indicated that they are aware of that possibility. He is more concerned with the WASC expressing concern over the lack of details.

Josette Descalzo asked if impromptu changes to the scope of proposal are allowed. Kirk Allen indicated that there should not be a change in scope per the Partial Funding Guidelines. He further added that through the Transfer Agreement, the applicant is required to deliver on the product and maintain the same intent. If there's a need to rework the scope, it would be through the third call for projects.

Charles Herbertson clarified that the WASC doesn't have the option of funding for one year and returning on the second to consider further funding; they either decide to fund it all now or not at all.

Megan Rue (UCLA) clarified why they selected the Ballona Creek for further Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) study. She noted that there is a great amount of literature which suggests that the Ballona Creek Watershed is one of the largest sources of pollution into the Santa Monica Bay and that many community stakeholders have expressed concern about MRSA's origins and ways to mitigate it.

#### c) SCW Project Funding by Municipality Map

Kirk Allen clarified that the map shows various City jurisdictions and the associated revenue generated within their boundaries. Green dots indicate funding allocated in 2021, while dark blue dots represent current funding requests. This will serve as another tool that the WASCs can use for decisions on their SIP.

#### d) Central Santa Monica Bay (CSMB) Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for populating the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Stormwater Investment Plan (SCW Portal & CSMB Scoring Rubric)

##### i) Scientific Studies Program (SSP)

Bruce Reznik asked for confirmation on the funding allocation for SSP. Kirk Allen referred to the Stormwater Investment Planning Tool. Bruce Reznik also asked if other WASCs decided whether they're moving ahead with the Regional Pathogen Study. Kirk Allen noted that he is unaware of any WASC's deliberations that are at the same stage.

Gloria Walton commented that her priority would be to get projects funded first, before weighing in on the studies.

Josette Descalzo expressed support for both Scientific Studies and the Technical Resource Program.

Rita Kampalath expressed her support for Gloria Walton's position, that it would be better to fund projects that already have adequate funding.

Bruce Hamamoto expressed his opposition to supporting both studies as they overlap each other. He further suggested that the Regional Pathogen Study engage UCLA to do some of the work. He also added that MRSA may be coming from gardening products that suppliers are making in their landscaping materials, which end up running off into the storm drains.

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Cung Nguyen and Darryl Ford extended their support for both Scientific Studies.

#### **7. Public Comment Period**

Shahriar Eftekharzadeh (SEITec) asked the WASC for justification on why it's much better to move forward with the pump station project (LASAN's Ballona Creek TMDL Project) than to do a gravity diversion project (SEITec's Ballona Creek Low Flow Diversion Project), which is cost effective and more environmentally friendly.

Richard Watson commented that there should be a need to reduce future projects. He explained that by focusing on pathogens causing bacteria, such as would be investigated in the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study, there may not be a need for as many future construction projects to capture stormwater to address bacteria.

#### **8. Voting Items**

Cung Nguyen seconded Josette Descalzo's motion for voting on the top two IP projects (Slauson Connect Project and Ballona Creek TMDL Project), TRP and two Scientific Studies. Motion did not pass: 5 Yes's, 9 No's, 1 Abstain.

Charles Herbertson motioned, and Bruce Reznik seconded for voting on the top two IP projects and the TRP project. Motion was approved for the 2021-22 SIP for the Central Santa Monica Bay WASC, passing with a vote of 12 Yes's, 2 No's, and 1 Abstain. Motion will be forwarded to Regional Oversight Committee, pending any conversation from the LAUSD or alternate applicant that is interested in Partial Funding.

#### **9. Meeting Schedule**

Kirk Allen noted that to get through the SIP program process and presentations, a second date was added, with June 7<sup>th</sup> being the tentative date pending the response from the LAUSD.

#### **10. Items for Next Agenda**

- LAUSD proposal
- Quarterly reporting: Projects from 2021 are now receiving funds and applicants should provide first report by May 15<sup>th</sup>.

Bruce Hamamoto suggested further discussion for the possibility to vote for one of the scientific items.

#### **11. Adjournment**

Charles Herbertson thanked the WASC members and public for their time and participation and adjourned the meeting.

**CENTRAL SANTA MONICA BAY WASC MEETING - May 3, 2021**

		Quorum Present				Voting Items	
Member Type	Organization	Member	Voting?	Alternate	Voting?	Top 2IP + TRP + 2SSP	Top 2IP + TRP
Agency	LACFCD	Cung Nguyen	X	Marcela Benavides		Y	N
Agency	West Basin MWD	E.J. Caldwell	X	Alex Heide		NOT PRESENT	NOT PRESENT
Agency	LA Water & Power	Delon Kwan		Art Castro	X	Y	N
Agency	LA Sanitation District	Sheila Brice	X	Michael Scaduto		N	Y
Agency	LA Recreation & Parks	Cathie Santo Domingo		Darryl Ford	X	Y	Y
Community Stakeholder	LAC Chief Sustainability Office	Rita Kampalath	X	Gary Gero		N	Y
Community Stakeholder	Lipa Consulting Company / Business Sector	Jacob Lipa		Alysen Weiland	X	A	A
Community Stakeholder	The Solutions Project / SCOPE	Gloria Walton	X	Gloria Medina		N	Y
Community Stakeholder	LA Waterkeeper	Bruce Reznik	X	Melanie Rivera		N	Y
Community Stakeholder	VACANT						
Municipal Members	Beverly Hills / West Hollywood	Josette Descalzo	X	Hany Demitri		Y	Y
Municipal Members	Culver City	<b>Charles Herbertson</b>	X	Kim Braun		Y	Y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Roberto Perez	X	Max Podemski		N	Y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Rafael Prieto	X			N	Y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	<b>Liz Crosson</b>		Susie Santilena	X	N	Y
Municipal Members	LAC Public Works	Bruce Hamamoto	X	Armando D'Angelo		N	Y
Municipal Members	Santa Monica	Curtis Castle	X	George Rodriguez		N	Y
Total Non-Vacant Seats		16			Yay (Y)	5	12
Total Voting Members Present		16			Nay (N)	9	2
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	1	1
Community Stakeholder		4			Total	15	15
Municipal Members		7			Not Approved		Approved

Other Attendees		
Aiyla Balakumar	Mara Luevano	Amy Meenan
Alfredo Magallanas	Marisol Cira	Brett Perry
Brenda Ponton	Maritsa DRA INC	Lori Selna
Carlos Moran	Megyn	br
Chanel Kincaid	Melanie Rivera	Caitlin Gray
Christine McLeod	Michael Gagan	David McNeil
Conor Mossavi	Michael Scaduto	Hans Tremmel
David McNeill	Mike	Sherilyn Correa
Jae	Mohammad Baig	Joyce Amaro
Jalaine Verdiner	Nichole Heil	
Jenna D'Ottavio	Nooshin Eftekhazadeh	
Jenny	Oliver Galang	
Jim Rasmus	Richard Watson	
Johanna Chang	Sarai Bhaga	
Joon Ball	Scott Singletary	
Julia Hawkinson	Sean Singletary	
Kara Plourde	Shahram Kharaghani	
Karen Lee	Shahriar Eftekhazadeh	
Katie Harrel	Shelly Luce	
Katie M	Tara Liampetchakul	
Kim Braun	Tiffany Wong	
Lorena Matos	Wendy Dinh	



# Public Comment Form

Name:\* Shahriar Eftekhazadeh Organization\*: SEITec  
Email\*: Shahriar.Eftekhazadeh@seitecinc.com Phone\*: 310 879 9376  
Meeting: CSMB WASC Date: 05/03/2021

LA County Public Works may contact me for clarification about my comments

\*Per Brown Act, completing this information is optional. At a minimum, please include an identifier so that you may be called upon to speak.

Phone participants and the public are encouraged to submit public comments (or a request to make a public comment) to [SafeCleanWaterLA@dpw.lacounty.gov](mailto:SafeCleanWaterLA@dpw.lacounty.gov). All public comments will become part of the official record.

Please complete this form and email to [SafeCleanWaterLA@dpw.lacounty.gov](mailto:SafeCleanWaterLA@dpw.lacounty.gov) by at least 5:00pm the day prior to the meeting with the following subject line: "Public Comment: [Watershed Area] [Meeting Date]" (ex. "Public Comment: USGR 4/8/20").

## Comments

The preliminary ranking of the proposed FY21-22 projects during the April 5, 2021 meeting placed the LASAN Ballona Creek TMDL Project that uses Pumped Diversion and Ozone Treatment "FIRST", and the SEITec Ballona Creek Low Flow Diversion project that uses Gravity Diversion and UV Treatment "LAST". These projects perform the exact same functions and yield the exact same benefits.

So, this Committee needs to explain why it is better for the public and the environment to spend \$32.0 Million and commit to \$1.2 Million per year O&M cost to consume more than 10 MWh per day of electricity over the next 50 year, than to spend \$15.0 Million (53% less) and commit to \$380,000 per year (68% less) to consume 1.7 MWh per day (83% less) for the exact same outcome?! What exactly is the rationale for this?!

The LASAN arguments for their Pump Station project and against the SEITec Gravity Alternative in their letter dated March 17, 2021, as well as the Committee's "concerns" raised during the March 18, 2021 meeting, have all been responded to and addressed in detail in SEITec letter dated April 4, 2021. The Committee must publicly discuss the responses and inform of any remaining questions and concerns.

This Committee's unanimous support of the LASAN Pump Station project despite its much higher cost and carbon footprint, in preference to the Gravity Alternative, and the rationale behind it, must be fully explained and objectively justified prior to finalizing the CSMB FY21-22 SIP.

Thank you,

