

# Regional Oversight Committee

## Meeting Minutes

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Thursday, June 16, 2022  
1:00pm – 4:00pm  
WebEx Meeting

### Committee Members Present:

Maria Mehranian, Cordoba/Former LA Regional Water Quality Control Board Chair  
Barbara Romero, City of Los Angeles  
Diana Tang, Long Beach Water Department  
Kristine Guerrero, League of Cities (ROC Vice Chair)  
Belinda Faustinos, Retired NGO & State Agency Executive  
Lauren Ahkiam, LAANE (ROC Chair)  
James Stahl, LA Regional Water Quality Control Board Acting Chair (non-voting member)

### Committee Members Not Present:

Elizabeth Crosson, Metropolitan Water District  
Elva Yañez, Prevention Institute  
Charles Trevino, Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District  
Carl Blum, LA County Flood Control District (non-voting member)

See attached sign-in sheet for full list of attendees.

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## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Kristine Guerrero, Vice Chair of the Regional Oversight Committee (ROC), welcomed Committee members, called the meeting to order, and noted that the meeting was being simultaneously broadcasted in Spanish.

District Staff conducted a brief tutorial on WebEx and facilitated the roll call of Committee members. All Committee members made self-introductions and a quorum was established.

## **2. Public Comment Period**

Katherine Pease spoke on behalf of OurWaterLA and stated their support for funding projects with strong community engagement plans and processes, especially related to disadvantaged communities. Pease stated the OurWaterLA's support for the incorporation of the following projects in the FY 22-23 Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs): Jackson Elementary School Project, Whitsett Fields Project, Angeles Mesa Project, Edward Vincent Jr. Park Stormwater Improvements Project, Hermosa Beach Multi-Benefit Parking Lot Greening Project, Lakewood Equestrian Center, Apollo Park Stormwater Capture Project, Vincent Lugo Park Stormwater Capture Project.

Pease stated OurWaterLA's opposition to the Regional Pathogen Study due to concerns about the study's ability to achieve its objectives and the objectives of the Safe Clean Water Program. Pease asked that the Lower Los Angeles River (LLAR), North Santa Monica Bay (NSMB), Santa Clara River (SCR), South Santa Monica Bay (SSMB), and Upper San Gabriel (USGR) River Watershed Area Steering Committees (WASCs) reconsider their funding allocation for the study.

Lynne Plambeck (Santa Clarita Organization for Planning and the Environment) concurred with Katherine Pease's public comment and stated that they would speak in a later public comment period regarding the SCR SIP.

## **3. Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 13, 2022**

The District presented meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Member Maria Mehranian motioned to approve the meeting minutes. Member Diana Tang seconded the motion. The Committee voted to approve the April 13, 2022 meeting minutes (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

# Regional Oversight Committee

## Meeting Minutes

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#### 4. Committee Member and District Updates

District Staff provided an update, noting:

- The Metrics and Monitoring Study (MMS) Equity and Community Enhancement White Paper is in draft form and will be shared publicly later in the summer. As part of the development process, there were multiple stakeholder advisory committee meetings. The MMS is expected to be completed in late 2023 with the goal to have additional metrics and tools available to support in decision-making, tracking project success, and meaningful planning. District Staff asked that all Committee members and interested others to stay ready for future opportunities to engage.
- The first stakeholder meeting to help develop the Credit Trading Program occurred on June 13, 2022 at 9:30am, and the second is scheduled for June 20, 2022 at 5 pm.
- The Round 4 Call for Projects closes on July 31, 2022. Information sessions will be held on June 22, 2022 and June 29, 2022. Certification of attendance is required by Round 4 Project Applicants. The information sessions plan to provide in-depth information regarding the Safe Clean Water Program.

Chair Ahkiam asked District Staff if the terms of the transfer agreements will be reviewed as part of the Round 4 Information Sessions. District staff answered that provisions for receiving funding are available on the SCWP website and confirmed they would also be reviewed during the information sessions.

#### 5. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

Vice Chair Guerrero disclosed a conversation with USGR WASC Member, Joshua Nelson, related to USGR SIP.

Member Mehranian stated intention to recuse herself from voting on the Upper Los Angeles River (ULAR), Central Santa Monica Bay (CSMB) and SSMB SIPs due to Cordoba's role related to certain projects considered by those WASCs. Accordingly, Member Mehranian asked that voting on the SIPs be done individually.

#### 6. Public Comment Period

Lynne Plambeck (Santa Clarita Organization for Planning and the Environment) stated opposition for the Jake Kuredjian Stormwater Improvement Project, a \$7 million project located in Pico Canyon. Plambeck shared that the program should focus on increasing groundwater due to the area's issue with overpumping. Plambeck stated that the project does not increase water supply and is upstream of a stormwater channel inlet which is causing water quality issues. Plambeck asked that the Committee not approve the project, and that they would instead consider a similar project with stormwater capture components in the upper watershed that would also address environmental justice issues.

Carolina Sanchez (Six Basins Watermaster) submitted a public comment in support of the Pelota Park Project. The public comment was displayed onscreen and is available on the SCWP website.

#### 7. Review/Discussion of FY 22-23 Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) Submittals

District Staff gave an overview of the ROC process and roles. District Staff stated that representatives from all nine of the WASCs were present and prepared to receive questions and give a two-minute overview of their respective WASCs submitted SIPs. Vice Chair Guerrero noted that District Staff posted transmittal packages related to the submitted SIPs for the Committee's review.

Vice Chair Guerrero opened the floor to general discussion.

# Regional Oversight Committee

## Meeting Minutes

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District Staff stated that Carl Blum (non-voting) submitted general high-level comments to the District to read in his absence. Member Blum's comments read that in recognition of the major drought in California, he believes that submitted capture projects should be stronger in terms of water supply benefits and that WASCs continue to react to relatively insignificant proposals. Member Blum's comments also expressed interest in seeing the region develop ways to move concepts/plans/designs/construction much faster.

Member James Stahl supported Member Blum's comments. Member Stahl acknowledged the public's efforts to minimize water demand and emphasized the role of the committee on increasing water supply. Member Stahl suggested the creation of a dashboard which shows the impact of funded projects on supply, as well as potential future consideration of the weighting of Water Supply benefits in the scoring. Chair Ahkiam noted that most SIPs, except Rio Hondo's (RH) SIP, had low scores for water supply; however, Chair Ahkiam stated their hope for the MMS is to assist planning decisions and acknowledged that most WASCs had appropriately left space in their budget, allowing future stormwater capture projects to be funded.

Vice Chair Guerrero stated that the MMS Study and work with Accelerate Resilience Los Angeles (ARLA) may help in identifying what areas can be improved on the water supply side. District Staff clarified that the MMS will not change the SCWP scoring itself; however, results from the study may affect future changes to the scoring.

Member Mehranian requested a regional data set showing the overall impact of the program's funded projects. Member Mehranian hoped that this kind of information could impact future decision-making.

Member Stahl stated that the SCWP water supply criteria should be revisited due to changed circumstances since Measure W was passed. Member Romero stated that the program should be mindful that scoring is impacted by the site conditions in specific Watershed Areas and that this should be considered as well when thinking of the original intent of Measure W and the SCWP.

Chair Ahkiam expressed concern over the difficulty of understanding how large projects funded by the programs are making progress with relation to the work force standards, project labor agreements, and targeted local hire. Chair Ahkiam expressed a desire to better understand and see progress related to these topics tracked since large water-related projects provide opportunity for community investment and the creation of quality jobs.

Vice Chair Guerrero closed general comments and moved to SIP-specific summaries and discussion, beginning with the USGR SIP.

Chair Ahkiam asked to discuss concerns brought up during the public comment period about funding of the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study. Chair Ahkiam asked for context on the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study, noting that in preliminary rankings, the study had differing results among the WASCs. District Staff noted that the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study was recommended for funding in 5 of the 9 WASCs. 2 WASCs had approved the study for funding in previous years and were recommending continued funding while 3 WASCs voted to recommend funding for the study for the first time. Member Stahl shared support for the study and commented that a better understanding of pathogens and testing of pathogens was extremely important to the SCWP Goals. The Committee discussed the logistics of the study. District Staff stated that they believe the study was crafted to be appropriately scaled up if and when funding was made available amongst the different WASCs.

The Committee asked the USGR WASC representative to speak on their reasoning for funding the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study. Allison Sweet, Chair of the USGR WASC, noted that the USGR WASC approved \$100,000 of funding towards the study in FY 21-22 and deferred remaining funding to FY24-25 and FY25-26. The approved FY21-22 funding for the study was not a large

# Regional Oversight Committee

## Meeting Minutes

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expenditure; however, the WASC wanted to begin engagement in the program. Vice Chair Guerrero asked District Staff if there was preliminary data from the study since the study had been approved for funding previously by two WASCs. District Staff stated there were not yet tangible results from the study.

Vice Chair Guerrero opened discussion related to the SCR SIP.

Chair Ahkiam acknowledged the public comment concerned about one of the projects and asked for more info. Darin Seegmiller (City of Santa Clarita) gave an overview of the SCR SIP. Seegmiller provided background that the Santa Clara River Watershed is a unique watershed since there are only two municipalities included in the watershed: Los Angeles County and the City of Santa Clarita. Seegmiller stated that the SIP funded 3 projects: the Pico Canyon Park Stormwater Improvements Project (Infrastructure Project), the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study (Scientific Study), and the Jake Kuredjian Park Stormwater Improvement Project (Technical Resources Project). Seegmiller stated that the WASC had a close vote, not due to lack of support for the projects, but due to some members preferring to conduct a site visit prior to voting. It was ultimately determined by the Committee that they did not feel a site visit was necessary given the information provided by the applicants. Seegmiller stated that the Pico Canyon Park project did include a stormwater capture component and that the WASC approved \$500,000 of funding for the design of the project.

Vice Chair Guerrero opened discussion related to the ULAR SIP.

Chair Ahkiam noted that they would like to see projects in the watershed with even stronger water supply components in the future. Multiple members cited a couple projects that they were excited to see come to fruition.

Vice Chair Guerrero opened discussion related to the LLAR SIP.

Chair Ahkiam noted that the Salt Lake Park Infiltration Cistern Project, based on the project's size and total construction costs (\$20 million), is a project that they would hope to see create economic and employment opportunities. Chair Ahkiam stated it was hard to tell if the project was making progress to comply with County's target local hire program. Chair Ahkiam expressed their hope to have more confidence in the project's progress towards these targets and brought attention to the broader issue of tracking work force standard compliance. Vice Chair Guerrero asked if the SCWP was collecting this data at the end of the project. District Staff confirmed that project developers are expected to track metrics to the best of their ability in quarterly reporting. Ongoing studies are expected to provide guidance and refine metrics in the future.

Vice Chair Guerrero opened discussion related to the CSMB SIP.

Similar to Chair Ahkiam's previous comment on the Salt Lake Park Infiltration Cistern Project, Chair Ahkiam noted that the Edward Vincent Jr. Park Stormwater Capture Project is also a large project (\$40 million), and Chair Ahkiam would like to know about the project's progress in producing quality jobs, how many of the jobs produced by the project are local or targeted hire, and how the project is complying with the County's work force standards.

There were no comments or discussion related to the NSMB, RH, LSGR, or SSMB SIPs.

### **8. Public Comment Period**

Lynne Plambeck (Santa Clarita Organization for Planning and the Environment) clarified their previously expressed concern related to the Jake Kuredjian Park Stormwater Improvement Project. Plambeck stated that they do not believe the project will meet its objectives due to the project site location. Plambeck

# Regional Oversight Committee

## Meeting Minutes

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explained that there is a flood control basin upstream of the project. Plambeck stated that they do not believe the project is an effective use of funds, especially due to the size of the project (\$7 million).

Joe Sullivan spoke on behalf of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Sullivan stated that they represent 10,000 electricians and 300 electrical contractors, and echoed Chair Ahkiam's previous comments related to Work Force Standard Compliance. Sullivan stated that they would like to see the Safe Clean Water Program funds create local careers. They stated that it costs \$35,000 to take on an apprentice since the union supports the apprentice through their training and education. Sullivan said the financial support from large projects is necessary to do so.

Richard Watson, project proponent for the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study, responded to concerns related to their study. Watson stated that the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study aims to improve water quality by focusing on viruses and riskier sources of pathogens.

### 9. Voting Items

- a) Approval of one of more of the 9 FY 22-23 SIP Submittals

District Staff reviewed the voting procedures with the Committee.

Chair Ahkiam motioned to approve the advancement of the SIPs for the USGR, LLAR, NSMB, LSGR Watershed Areas to the Board of Supervisors. The motion was seconded by Member Mehranian. The vote was approved (see vote tracking sheet).

Chair Ahkiam motioned to approve the advancement of the SIPs for the ULAR and SSMB watersheds to the Board of Supervisors. Vice Chair Guerrero seconded the motion. The vote was approved (see vote tracking sheet).

Chair Ahkiam motioned to approve the advancement of the SIP for the RH watershed to the Board of Supervisors. Member Belinda Faustinos seconded the motion. The vote was approved (see vote tracking sheet).

Chair Ahkiam motioned to advance the CSMB SIP to the Board of Supervisors with a comment attached to emphasize the importance of enforcing work force standards (local hiring, Project Labor Agreement, etc.), specifically with regards to Edward Vincent Jr. Park Stormwater Capture Project. District Staff sought clarification and confirmed that the purpose of this comment was to flag the concern to the Board. District Staff noted that whenever a project qualifies to be subject to the SCWP work force standards, these standards are mandated as a requirement of the transfer agreement. District Staff noted that the CSMB SIP recommends \$4 million in design funding for the Edward Vincent Jr. Park Project, so it'd be the subsequent construction phase Transfer Agreement that would mandate these requirements. The motion was seconded by Member Faustinos, and the vote was approved by the Committee (see vote tracking sheet).

Chair Ahkiam motioned to advance the SCR SIP with a comment noting community concern over the Jake Kuredjian Park Stormwater Improvements Project. A substitute motion was proposed by Vice Chair Guerrero to advance the SCR SIP as is.

District Staff clarified that the Jake Kuredjian Park Stormwater Improvements Project is proposed to be part of the Technical Resources Program (TRP) as a Project concept, not an Infrastructure Project. TRP Project concepts are not scored. If approved by the Board, \$300,000 would be used to develop the Feasibility Study. The Feasibility Study will provide an analysis of key technical factors, including location, and should identify the appropriate solutions to all pertinent concerns. Following the completion of the Feasibility Study, the project concept may indeed vary from the initial idea. The resulting project, if confirmed feasible and desirable, would likely be resubmitted for future SCWP Infrastructure Project funding.

# Regional Oversight Committee

## Meeting Minutes

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Chair Ahkiam accepted the substitute motion. Member Mehranian seconded the motion. The vote was approved (see tracking sheet). Vice Chair Guerrero asked that community concerns are noted by the District to the Board separate from the advanced SIP.

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

Member Faustinos asked District Staff for a future update on the Schools Education, Work Force Development, and Community Engagement and Public Education Programs. Vice Chair Guerrero noted that requests for future agenda items may also be sent to the District.

The tentative Tuesday June 21, 2022, 1:00 – 4:00 PM and Thursday June 30, 1:00 – 4:00 pm meetings were cancelled.

### **11. Meeting Adjourned**

Vice Chair Guerrero thanked ROC members and the public and adjourned the meeting.



Attendees  
Regional Oversight Committee Meeting - June 16, 2022

Alexander Iglesias - LACFCD	Joshua Nelson	
alison sweet	Juan Diaz-Carreras	
Allen Ma - LA Co Public Works	Julie Allen	
Amanda Begley	Justin Jones - LACFCD	
Andrew Gray	Katherine Pease (she/her)	
Austin Poncelet	Kevin Kim (LACFCD)	
Barbara Romero	Kirk Allen	
Belen Bernal	Kristen Ruffell	
Belinda Faustinos	Kristine Guerrero	
benny kona	Lauren Ahkiam	
brett perry	Lauren Marshall	
Brianne Logasa	Leslie Friedman Johnson	
Bridget Childs	Lidia Rivera	
Call-in User_2	Lisa O'Brien	
Call-in User_4	Lorena Matos	
Cameron Castillo	Luis Perez	
Christine McLeod	Lynne Plambeck	
CJ Caluag	Madelyn Glickfeld	
Clarasophia Gust	Maggie Gardner	
Conor Mossavi	Maria Mehranian	
Craig Cadwallader	marissa caringella	
Danielle Chupa	Matt Frary (LACFCD)	
Darin Seegmiller	Mayra Cabrera	
Debra G	Melissa You	
Devon Provo	Michael Scaduto	
Diana Tang	Michelle Kim	
Ed Othmer	Michelle Staffield	
Ed Suher, CASC Engr	Michelle Struthers	
Emiko Innes	Mikaela Randolph	
Eric Bonilla - LACFCD	Nate Sachs	
Fernando Villaluna	Pablo Forni - LACFCD	
geraldine trivedi	Raina Dwivedi	
Gina Nila	Richard Watson	
Grace Kast	Shari Garwick	
Gus Orozco	Sharon Gallant	
Hans Tremmel	Stephanie Tong - LACFCD	
Heather Merenda	Susie Santilena	
Jason Casanova	Tara Dales LLAR Coordinator	
Jeannette Hernandez	Teresa Villegas	
JENNY NEWMAN	Tom Love	
Jim Stahl	Tori Klug (Regional Coord.)	
Joe Sullivan	Traci Minamide	
johanna chang	Uriel Cobian	
Jonathan Abelson	wendy Dinh	
Josafat Flores		
Joseph Venzon		





# Public Comment Form

Name\*: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization\*: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email\*: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone\*: \_\_\_\_\_  
Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- 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

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# Public Comment Form

Name:\* Annelisa Moe Organization\*: OurWaterLA  
Email\*: amoe@healthebay.org Phone\*: 7075404303  
Meeting: Regional Oversight Committee Date: 6/16/2022

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.

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## Comments

For OurWaterLA, priority for project funding must go to projects that clearly demonstrate a strong community engagement plan and process; that include a significant community investment element; that provide benefits to and, as applicable, are located in a disadvantaged community; and utilize vegetated nature-based solutions. Many projects proposed for FY 22-23 incorporated these components, including Jackson Elementary School, Whitsett Fields, Angeles Mesa, Edward Vincent Jr. Park Stormwater Improvements Project, Hermosa Beach Multi-Benefit Parking Lot Greening Project, Lakewood Equestrian Center, Apollo Park Stormwater Capture Park and Vincent Lugo Park Stormwater Capture Project.

OurWaterLA opposes the Regional Pathogen Study primarily owing to concerns about how well this study will achieve its proposed goals, and whether those proposed goals even support the goals of the Safe, Clean Water Program. This proposal targets a specific source of a specific pollutant rather than providing multiple benefits, and will potentially weaken water quality objectives rather than improving our water quality. This proposed study therefore will not support many of the Safe, Clean Water Program goals. We request that the ROC send the SIPs back to LLAR, NSMB, SCR, SSMB, and USGR to reconsider funding allocation for this study.

Finally, with Watershed Coordinator work in full swing, it is important to ensure that sufficient funds remain for future projects. While it is preferable for WASCs to not exceed 70% funding allocation in upcoming year within their SIPs, there are some specific cases where additional funding was necessary to move forward on projects that exemplify the Safe, Clean Water Program.