



**SAWPA COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 18, 2024**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Bruce Whitaker, Chair, Orange County Water District
Mike Gardner, Vice Chair, Western Municipal Water District
T. Milford Harrison, Secretary-Treasurer, San Bernardino Valley
Municipal Water District
David J. Slawson, Eastern Municipal Water District
Jasmin A. Hall, Inland Empire Utilities Agency

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

None

**ALTERNATE COMMISSIONERS
PRESENT; NON-VOTING**

Gil Botello, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District
Denis Bilodeau, Orange County Water District

STAFF PRESENT

Jeff Mosher, Karen Williams, Rachel Gray, Shavonne Turner, Rick
Whetsel, Sara Villa, Melissa Bustamonte, Dean Unger, John Leete,
Alison Lewis, Marie Jauregui

OTHERS PRESENT

Andrew Turner, Lagerlof, LLP; Nick Kanetis, Eastern Municipal
Water District; Craig Miller, Western Municipal Water District; Mallory
O'Connor, Western Municipal Water District; Lisa Haney, Orange
County Water District; Beth Olhasso, West Coast Advisors; Michelle
Joy Gold

The Regular Meeting of the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority Commission was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Chair Bruce Whitaker on behalf of the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, 11615 Sterling Avenue, Riverside, California.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

An oral roll call was duly noted and recorded by the Clerk of the Board.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments; there were no public comments received via email.

4. ITEMS TO BE ADDED OR DELETED

There were no items to be added or deleted.

5. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: JUNE 4, 2024

Recommendation: Approve as posted.

B. TREASURER'S REPORT: MAY 2024

Recommendation: Approve as posted.

C. STATEMENT OF INVESTMENT POLICY (CM#2024.32)

Recommendation: Adopt Resolution No. 2024-6, approving the Statement of Investment Policy and delegate authority to the Chief Financial Officer to invest or reinvest funds consistent with the Statement of Investment Policy.

MOVED, to approve the Consent Calendar as posted.

Result:	Adopted by Roll Call Vote
Motion/Second:	Slawson/Gardner
Ayes:	Gardner, Hall, Harrison, Slawson, Whitaker
Nays:	None
Abstentions:	None
Absent:	None

6. WORKSHOP DISCUSSION AGENDA

A. LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Beth Olhasso of West Coast Advisors provided a presentation on the Sacramento Update. Regarding the Drought/Water Supply Update, things are looking good in the northern part of the State. As of June 16, 2024, Reservoirs Oroville's at 127% Shasta is at 114%, and Folsom at 120%, overall, a lot of water in the system. The big concern is the pumping restrictions in the Delta and keeping San Luis from being able to fill back up, as it is currently at 54%.

All Legislative Bills (Bills) are in the second year of a two-year session, and the second house policy committee deadline is July 3, 2024. Ms. Olhasso highlighted the following priority Bills:

- SB 366 (Caballero) CA Water Plan: Long-term Supply Targets
- AB 460 (Bauer-Kahen) Water Rights
- AB 2079 (Bennett) Groundwater
- SB 1255 (Durazo) Low-Income Rate Assistance
- SB 903 (Skinner) PFAS
- Connection and Capacity Fees Update: SB 1210 (Skinner), SB 937 (Weiner), and AB 1820 (Schiavo)
- POTW Effluent Testing: AB 3073 (Haney) Illicit Substances and SB 1147 (Portantino) Microplastics
- Water Use Efficiency: SB 1110 (Ashby) and SB 1330 (Archuleta)

Regarding the Climate Bond Update, the legislature passed a budget last week that was only a two-party agreement between the Senate and the Assembly. The Governor did not sign off on this so before the fiscal year ends (June 30, 2024), the final negotiations on the budget are currently being made prior to the legislature's recess (July 3, 2024). Ms. Olhasso noted there are three Bonds that are high priority, Education Bond is number one for both the Senate and Assembly, the Climate Bond at number two, and the Housing Bond at number three. There are negotiations currently taking place on three versions of the budget for the Climate Bond, a \$10 billion, \$8 billion, and \$6 billion version. It was noted that if the Climate Bond does not get through the November ballot, it could be two years (2026) for the next opportunity due to it having to go through a general election.

Ms. Olhasso emphasized that there is a huge budget deficit and unfortunately, the Watershed Climate Resilience Programs, PFAS, and Recycled Water funding have been cut, but are still under negotiation with Legislature and the Governor. The Urban Water Use Efficiency regulations draft was released June 14, 2024, and is anticipated to be adopted in the late July early August timeframe. In addition, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) released Cost Benefit analysis Delta Conveyance stating that there would be billions of dollars in benefits to communities across the State. There is a CA Air Resources Board Workshop scheduled June 20, 2024, regarding the requirements for Advanced Clean Fleets.

This item is to receive and file; no action was taken on agenda item no. 6.A.

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. AERIAL IMAGERY ANALYSIS OF ARUNDO DONAX IN THE SANTA ANA RIVER WATERSHED (CM#2024.33)

Rick Whetsel provided a presentation on the Aerial Imagery Analysis of Arundo Donax (Arundo) in the Santa Ana River Watershed (SARW) Status Update, contained in the agenda packet on pages 47-63. SAWPA staff is implementing an aerial imagery analysis project to identify invasive species within the riparian corridors of the SARW and to support the collective development of a strategy to prioritize removal projects and track the progress of Arundo eradication.

Arundo in the watershed consumes up to 12,000-36,000 AFY of water based on 600-1800 acres of Arundo in the watershed. Removing an acre of this species throughout the Santa Ana River riparian corridor and its tributaries saves 20-acre feet of water per year.

The project objective is a watershed-wide mapping of Arundo within riparian areas and apply a high resolution 3-inch, 4 band aerial imagery for the SARW and employ ESRI's ArcGIS Deep Learning Tools to develop a process using GIS-based decision tools for identifying locations, prioritizing projects, and tracking progress of removal activities. Deep Learning is a type of machine learning that involves teaching a computer to recognize patterns. The computer model learns from training samples and scans the image to identify similar features.

The benefits to the member agencies and other interested parties for the removal of Arundo includes:

- Increase local water supply resilience,
- Restoration of the natural habitat,
- Support Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) permitting requirements (Orange County Water District and San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District),
- Reduce the ignition source for fires,
- Support regional collaboration for invasive species removal, and
- Support grant funding opportunities for removal projects.

Interested parties to this planning project include:

- SAWPA Member Agencies,
- Resource Conservation Districts,
- Watershed stakeholders (county flood control and parks districts),
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other federal agencies, and
- Community-based organizations.

Mr. Whetsel noted that there is a total of three phases anticipated to be done and Phase 1 is completed. He referenced page 59 of the agenda packet and provided the Phase 1 Project Area results. A total project area of 6,419 acres contains 240 acres of Arundo with model accuracy of 83%. Commissioner Gardner emphasized the importance of doing an analysis upstream. If the goal is to eradicate Arundo, you must start upstream in the headwaters and work your way downstream due to one plant can infest the entire river.

This item is to receive and file; no action was taken on agenda item no. 7.A.

8. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

Recommendation: Receive for Information.

A. CASH TRANSACTIONS REPORT – APRIL 2024

B. INTER-FUND BORROWING – APRIL 2024 (CM#2024.34)

**C. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS/FINANCIAL REPORTING – APRIL 2024
(CM#2024.35)**

D. STATE LEGISLATIVE REPORT

E. GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

There were no reports from the General Manager.

F. CHAIR’S COMMENTS/REPORT

There were no comments/reports from the Chair.

G. COMMISSIONERS’ COMMENTS

There were no Commissioner comments.

H. COMMISSIONERS’ REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were no requests for future agenda items.

9. CLOSED SESSION

There was no Closed Session.

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for review, Chair Bruce Whitaker adjourned the meeting at 10:21 a.m.

Approved at a Regular Meeting of the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority Commission on Tuesday, July 2, 2024.

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Bruce Whitaker

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Bruce Whitaker, Chair

Attest:

DocuSigned by:

Sara Villa

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Sara Villa, Clerk of the Board