

MEETING NOTES

Emerging Constituents Program Task Force

April 29, 2025

ATTENDEES:

ACWA, Nick Blair
City of Beaumont, Kevin Lee
City of Beaumont, Thaxton Van Belle
EVMWD, Sudhir Mohleji
EVWMD, Lenai Hunter
IEUA, Bonita Fan
IEUA, Daisy Puga
IEUA, Nicole Cook
IEUA, Pietro Cambiaso
IEUA, Sushmitha Reddy
Kahn, Soares, & Conway, (KSC), Abby Taylor-Silva
Kahn, Soares, & Conway, (KSC), Theresa (Tess) Dunham
MWD of Southern California, Theresa Slifko
OCWD, Lily Sanchez
OCWD, Patrick Versluis
Riverside Public Utilities, Drew Faherty
Riverside Public Utilities, Farid Ishak Boushaki
Riverside Public Utilities, Robin Glenney

RWQCB, Cindy Li
RWQCB, Faraz Asad
RWQCB, Jessica Law
RWQCB, Pamela Ybarra
SAWPA, Emily Fuentes
SAWPA, Ian Achimore
SAWPA, Jeff Mosher
SAWPA, Natalia Gonzalez
SAWPA, Rick Whetsel
SAWPA/IEUA, Jasmin Hall
SAWPA/SBVMWD, Gil Botello
SAWPA/SBVMWD, T. Milford Harrison
SBMWD, Jennifer Shepardson
West Yost, Lucy Hedley
WMWD, Jennifer McMullin
WMWD, Lyndy Lewis
WMWD, Melissa Bustamonte
YVWD, Ashley Gibson

Call to Order/Introductions

The Emerging Constituents Task Force meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Ian Achimore at SAWPA with participants participating remotely and in person. Brief introductions were made.

Approval of December 2024 Meeting Notes

The December 16, 2024 meeting notes were approved as posted.

Association of California Water Agencies PFAS Cost of Compliance and Barriers Study – Nick Blair, ACWA

Nick Blair, Senior Policy Advocate at ACWA, presented a study that ACWA is conducting in collaboration with HDR Engineering to assess the cost of compliance and barriers faced by California water agencies in treating PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances). The study aims to gather both qualitative and quantitative data on the costs associated with PFAS treatment, waste disposal, and compliance with the U.S. EPA's Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs), which have been in effect since April 2024. Additionally, the study will evaluate the impact of PFAS compliance on water rates and affordability, and offer policy recommendations to address barriers in meeting federal standards. Mr. Blair highlighted the significance of this study as it would provide valuable data for advocacy efforts, help shape future California PFAS MCLs, and inform regulatory decisions. The study is still in its early stages, with current efforts focused on prioritizing tasks and collecting data. ACWA is seeking funding from member agencies, estimating the total cost to be around \$50,000, with partial funding covered by HDR and the rest by contributions from participating agencies. Mr. Blair emphasized the need for broader data to accurately represent the cost impacts on public agencies, particularly in light of ongoing regulatory changes, including the potential adoption of a California PFAS MCL. He encouraged additional water agencies to join the ACWA working group to contribute to data collection and funding, highlighting the study's potential to influence policy discussions with regulators and lawmakers.

Regulatory Report and Updates – Tess Dunham, KSC

Tess Dunham, of KSC, provided a series of regulatory updates covering various environmental and pesticide-related issues. She began with news about the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR), which recently appointed Dr. Karen Morrison as the new director. A new study on pyrethroid and fipronil

concentrations in biosolids was also released in 2025, highlighting the findings from various POTWs. Additionally, DPR is forming an [environmental justice advisory committee](#) and developing [a pesticide prioritization process](#), inviting public comments on a draft process until May 8. This prioritization process will assess the risks of new and existing pesticides and determine potential mitigation or cancellations based on data quality.

Ms. Dunham then discussed the ongoing efforts regarding pyrethroid pesticides in the Central Valley, mentioning a research plan under development since 2017. She also briefly touched on a PFAS update, including recent federal EPA actions indicating continued progress on PFAS regulation, contrary to expectations of regulatory rollbacks. Several bills related to PFAS and emerging contaminants in California were highlighted, including [SB 454](#) (a PFAS mitigation fund bill), [SB 682](#) (a bill targeting PFAS in consumer products), and [AB 1148](#) (addressing bisphenols in food packaging).

Ms. Dunham also highlighted the [State Water Board's 2025 priorities](#), focusing on the development of MCLs for PFOS and PFOA, testing in disadvantaged communities, harmful bacteria strategies, and addressing ocean acidification. She shared updates on the biological objectives process, which continues to evolve, particularly regarding the integration of new research into water quality objectives for biological integrity. The ongoing 2026 Integrated Report and related State Water Board/San Diego Regional Board meetings were discussed, especially the discussion over how the CSCI Model's scoring will impact water body impairment determinations in California. Ms. Dunham concluded by emphasizing the importance of these ongoing discussions and a [May 6 State Water Board workshop agenda item](#) focused on amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Diego Region to incorporate a biological objective.

Recent Task Force Outreach Activities – Emily Fuentes, SAWPA

Emily Fuentes, of SAWPA, provided updates on the recent outreach activities of the Task Force. Over the past quarter, the focus has been on several topics, including public health goals, the environmental benefits of drinking tap water, and the health advantages of staying hydrated with tap water. For May, a few video scripts approved by the Task Force are currently in production. This time, the team is experimenting with a new format, creating short-form content like Instagram reels, instead of traditional horizontal videos. This shift aims to make the content more versatile, particularly for social media, and to better engage with targeted audiences across this Southern California watershed. After the videos are rolled out, they plan to analyze their impact using growth metrics to assess the effectiveness of this new approach. The update concluded with a brief exchange about her involvement with the Task Force.

Next Steps for Task Force Budget for Fiscal Years Ending 2026 & 2027 – Ian Achimore, SAWPA

Mr. Achimore discussed the next steps for the Task Force's budget for the fiscal years 2026 and 2027. He reminded members that the budget amounts had been finalized during the previous meeting, and the deadline for submitting any "fatal flaw" comments was January 10th. No significant changes or concerns were raised by the January 10th deadline, so the budget is final. The annual contribution per task force member is approximately \$14,000, split equally among the 13 task force members. The budget includes costs for consultant work, staff time, special activities, and a 5% contingency. Mr. Achimore highlighted that while the budget has been adopted and the dollar amounts are set, there will be further consideration of what fits under the "special activities" category, such as small-scale studies or additional regulatory analysis. Discussions are ongoing with consultants, and the task force members will receive more detailed information on these activities in the coming months. Task force members can expect a follow-up email with additional details about the budget before the next meeting, likely at the end of the current quarter in June.

Future Meeting Scheduling – Ian Achimore, SAWPA

The next Emerging Constituents Program Task Force will be scheduled via doodle poll and will be distributed to the Task Force members by email at a later date.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 1:52 p.m.

DRAFT