



**SAWPA COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
APRIL 15, 2025**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Mike Gardner, Chair, Western Municipal Water District  
Gil Botello, Vice Chair, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District  
Philip E. Paule, Secretary-Treasurer, Eastern Municipal Water District  
Jasmin A. Hall, Inland Empire Utilities Agency  
Denis Bilodeau, Orange County Water District [via – zoom]

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT**

None

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:  
NON-VOTING**

T. Milford Harrison, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District  
Fred Jung, Orange County Water District [via – zoom]

**STAFF PRESENT**

Jeff Mosher, Karen Williams, David Ruhl, Rachel Gray, Shavonne Turner, John Leete, Pete Vitt, Ian Achimore, Haley Gohari, Sara Villa, Emily Fuentes, Marie Jauregui, Natalia Gonzalez, Zyanya Ramirez

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Thomas S. Bunn, Lagerlof, LLP; Nick Kanetis, Eastern Municipal Water District; Eddie Lin, Inland Empire Utilities Agency; Lisa Haney, Orange County Water District; John Kennedy, Orange County Water District; Carly Pierce, Western Municipal Water District; Mallory O'Connor, Western Municipal Water District; Adekunle Ojo, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District; Gene Hernandez, Yorba Linda Water District

The Regular Meeting of the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority Commission was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Chair Mike Gardner on behalf of the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, 11615 Sterling Avenue, Riverside, California, and Denis Bilodeau at 601 N. Ross Street, Room 327, Santa Ana, CA 92701.

**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.

**4. ITEMS TO BE ADDED OR DELETED**

There were no items to be added or deleted.

**5. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**A. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: APRIL 1, 2025**

**Recommendation:** Approve as posted.

**MOVED**, to approve the Consent Calendar as posted.

Result:	Adopted by Roll Call Vote
Motion/Second:	Botello/Paule
Ayes:	Bilodeau, Botello, Gardner, Hall, Paule
Nays:	None
Abstentions:	None
Absent:	None

## 6. **NEW BUSINESS**

### A. **MIDDLE SANTA ANA RIVER PATHOGEN TMDL TASK FORCE REGULATORY SUPPORT (CM#2025.31)**

Rachel Gray provided a presentation on the Middle Santa Ana River (MSAR) Pathogen TMDL Task Force Regulatory Support, contained in the agenda packet on pages 27-36.

Ms. Gray provided an overview of the MSAR TMDL Task Force's efforts on focusing on improving water quality by assessing and addressing pollution sources while ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements, and ongoing activities related to water quality management in the region, with a primary focus on addressing E. coli pollution sources and managing wet weather impacts. Tess Dunham of Kahn, Soares & Conway, LLP has been instrumental in facilitating the regulatory aspects of the task force's work, coordinating with the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board, and ensuring the continuation of necessary activities, such as permit updates and participation in statewide water quality projects.

On behalf of the MSAR TMDL Task Force and SAWPA staff it is recommended that Ms. Dunham services continue and attend the task force meetings, engage with the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board, support the Basin Plan amendment process, and work on regional and statewide water quality permits and initiatives, including the regional MS4 permit.

Commissioner Botello reported that he attends the MSAR Task Force meetings and commended Ms. Dunham's efforts and noted that she is deeply knowledgeable and does an excellent job in breaking down complex issues into understandable terms and her leadership has helped move the task force forward in terms of collaboration and decision-making.

**MOVED**, that the Commission authorizes the General Manager to execute the following:

1. General Services Agreement with Kahn, Soares & Conway, LLP, and
2. Task Order No. KSC384-04 with Kahn, Soares & Conway, LLP for an amount not to exceed \$141,500, to provide strategic and regulatory support for the Middle Santa Ana River Pathogen TMDL Task Force for FY 2025-26 and FY 2026-27.

Result:	Adopted by Roll Call Vote
Motion/Second:	Botello/Hall
Ayes:	Bilodeau, Botello, Gardner, Hall, Paule
Nays:	None
Abstentions:	None
Absent:	None

### B. **SANTA ANA RIVER WATERSHED CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE PLAN – ENGAGEMENT AND MEMBER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT (CM#2025.32)**

Haley Gohari provided a presentation on the Santa Ana River Watershed Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan (CARP), contained in the agenda packet on pages 39-56.

Ms. Gohari provided an overview of the CARP Grant consultant support to include public agency, tribal, and community engagement. The key strategies of the CARP were outlined, led by Woodard and Curran, who will develop a comprehensive adaptation and resilience plan and a digital platform to host data, analyses, and outcomes. Coordination with tribal and community engagement efforts will be led by SAWPA, Soboba, and UCR (on behalf of ISC3). The engagement will focus on reviewing reference materials. Planning and executing workshops per agency service area. Developing assessments (risk, vulnerability), adaptation strategies, and resilience portfolios. Establishing metrics and incorporating findings from all engagement efforts into the final plan.

On April 7, Woodard & Current held a kickoff meeting with all grant partners to provide a comprehensive project overview. During the meeting, they shared the project timeline and schedule, introduced a meeting plan focused on engagement coordination, and gave progress updates. This session helped all grant partners understand their specific roles and how they fit into the overall development of the CARP.

For tribal engagement, Soboba has developed its own work plan incorporating culturally relevant engagement methods such as talking circles, breakout sessions, and presentations during tribal conferences, workshops, and similar gatherings. Notable upcoming events include the Regional Tribal Operations Committee in June, the EPA Region 9 Tribal Conference in October, and coordination efforts through Native American Environmental Protection programs. Soboba will also engage directly with other tribes within the watershed. Digital tools, including a survey, will support their outreach and build on the existing vulnerability assessment work they have already begun.

Community engagement is being led by UCR (ISC3). They have created a community-specific work plan that includes developing community surveys, creating an engagement calendar, collaborating with the Community Advisory Panels (CAP), and identifying community-based organizations to support watershed-wide outreach efforts. Their work is designed to ensure that community voices are well-represented in the planning process.

Ms. Gohari noted that the member agency involvement is structured around regular opportunities for oversight and input. Agencies will engage through quarterly Planning Managers Meetings and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) sessions. These meetings will allow members to participate in reviewing reference materials, planning and attending workshops, and providing feedback on major deliverables such as technical memos and draft plan components. Specific quarterly milestones include sharing initial data requests and engagement steps in March, presenting the public agency engagement plan in July, updating on digital presence and reference material summaries in September, and presenting risk and vulnerability assessments in December. Each meeting offers an opportunity for agency staff and stakeholders to provide guidance and input as work progresses.

The TAC will play a key advisory role by offering technical insights and reviewing findings from public engagement. It aims to include representatives from a variety of sectors to ensure a multi-jurisdictional, multi-benefit approach to identifying local and regional projects. These efforts are all part of the broader goal of developing an implementable CARP that supports regional resilience and collaboration across the watershed. The first TAC meeting is scheduled for April 28, 2025, and will focus on reviewing reference materials and initiating the data request process. This meeting marks an important step in engaging TAC members and aligning their input with CARP development.

Ms. Gohari reported that SAWPA staff are developing an inventory of existing plans and reference documents. A formal data request will be distributed to member agencies and public agency stakeholders to collect any climate-related materials not already captured. This

collective input will ensure the plan reflects comprehensive and locally relevant data. Woodard & Curran will then produce an annotated summary that synthesizes the reviewed materials. Public agency workshops will be organized by member agency service area and will adopt a hybrid format participation to maximize accessibility and engagement. These workshops will be supported by surveys to gather additional input and will cover key CARP components including risk and vulnerability assessments, adaptation strategies, and resilience portfolios. Member agencies are expected to actively participate in the workshops and help identify additional sub-agencies or stakeholders who should be engaged in the planning process.

SAWPA staff will be sharing several key documents for member agency review. These include the full Woodard & Curran work plan, public agency engagement plan, and summaries of both community and tribal engagement efforts. Member agencies will also have the opportunity to review various draft CARP components, such as compiled risks and vulnerabilities (both at the service area and watershed level), the full vulnerability assessment and matrix, summarized outcomes from community and tribal engagement, adaptation strategies, and resilience portfolios. Additional materials include the digital presence, a set of metrics and indicators to track progress, funding strategies to support implementation, and both draft and final versions of the CARP.

The next steps include finalizing and distributing the Woodard & Curran work plan and engagement plans for review. The upcoming April 28<sup>th</sup> meeting will also kick off the formal data request process, ensuring a strong foundation of reference materials to guide the planning work ahead.

Commissioner Hall suggested incorporating a review of survey findings into the TAC meetings or planning manager sessions to help ensure that input from across the region is integrated into the planning process. Commissioner Botello suggested incorporating an executive summary to capture all the key highlights of the plan, this summary could serve as a quick reference or presentation tool.

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

## **7. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS**

Recommendation: Receive for Information.

### **A. CASH TRANSACTIONS REPORT – FEBRUARY 2025**

**Presenter:** Karen Williams

### **B. INTER-FUND BORROWING – FEBRUARY 2025 (CM#2025.33)**

**Presenter:** Karen Williams

### **C. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS/FINANCIAL REPORTING – FEBRUARY 2025**

**Presenter:** Karen Williams

### **D. PROJECT AGREEMENT 25 – OWOW FUND – FINANCIAL REPORT, FEBRUARY 2025**

**Presenter:** Karen Williams

### **E. PROJECT AGREEMENT 25 – ROUNDTABLE FUND – FINANCIAL REPORT, FEBRUARY 2025**

**Presenter:** Karen Williams

### **F. STATE LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

**Presenter:** Jeff Mosher

**G. GENERAL MANAGER REPORT**

Jeff Mosher reported that responses to the Investment Management Request for Proposals are due April 24<sup>th</sup>, and staff have secured commitments from the member agencies staff to participate in the selection committee.

The Legal Services Request for Qualifications is also due on April 24<sup>th</sup>, there has been discussion about Commission involvement, and there are a couple of process options that Mr. Mosher will discuss with Chair Gardner. Mr. Mosher noted that this week is Rachel Gray's last week at SAWPA and asked her to share what her new role will be.

Ms. Gray informed the Commission that she will be assuming the role of Executive Director at the Central Valley Salinity Coalition. This is an exciting opportunity and is eager to continue advancing the critical work of salinity management on a broader scale. Ms. Gray noted that she is deeply grateful for the invaluable experience and knowledge she is gained at SAWPA, and this chapter has prepared her well for the journey ahead.

Commissioner Paule reported that he has had the privilege of working with Ms. Gray at two different organizations and can confidently say she exemplifies professionalism in every sense. Her expertise, commitment, and steady leadership in initiatives of this nature are truly unparalleled and commended her for all her efforts.

**H. CHAIR'S COMMENTS/REPORT**

Chair Mike Gardner reported that Senate Bill 72, authored by Senator Caballero, passed its first policy committee with unanimous support. There is no hearing date thus far, though it is headed to the Senate Appropriations Committee next month.

**I. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**

There were no Commissioners' comments.

**J. COMMISSIONERS' REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no requests for future agenda items.

**8. CLOSED SESSION**

There was no Closed Session.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business for review, Chair Mike Gardner adjourned the meeting at 9:59 a.m.

**Approved at a Regular Meeting of the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority Commission on Tuesday, May 6, 2025.**

Signed by:

*Mike Gardner*

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Mike Gardner, Chair

Attest:

DocuSigned by:

*Sara Villa*

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Sara Villa, Clerk of the Board