



**SAWPA COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 19, 2025**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Mike Gardner, Chair, Western Municipal Water District
Gil Botello, Vice Chair, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District
Philip E. Paule, Eastern Municipal Water District
Jasmin Hall, Inland Empire Utilities Agency [9:41 a.m.]
Denis Bilodeau, Orange County Water District [via – zoom, 9:42 a.m.]

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

None

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT;
NON-VOTING**

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

STAFF PRESENT

Karen Williams, David Ruhl, Shavonne Turner, Dean Unger, John Leete, Ian Achimore, Sara Villa, Alison Lewis, Natalia Gonzalez, Marie Jauregui, Emily Fuentes, Haley Gohari, Zyanya Ramirez

OTHERS PRESENT

Thomas S. Bunn [9:55 a.m.], Lagerlof, LLP; Lisa Haney, 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; Aaron Echols, Inland Empire Resource Conservation District; Valerie Amezcua, City of Santa Ana

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 San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District's Board Room, 380 E. Vanderbilt Way, San Bernardino, CA 92408 and Commissioner 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: AUGUST 5, 2025

Recommendation: Approve as posted.

B. INLAND EMPIRE BRINE LINE RESERVE FUNDS REVIEW (CM#2025.58)

Recommendation: That the Commission approve the following:

1. R-01 Brine Line Operating Reserve

Set the target balance at \$2,548,941, representing 25% of total operating expenses of \$10,195,765 for Fiscal Year Ending (FYE) 2025, an increase of \$257,833, and continue to accrue interest.

2. R-07 Brine Line Replacement and Capital Investment Reserve

Establish the minimum and target funding levels at \$19,870,091 and \$48,830,227, respectively, based on the revised Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) total of \$69.2 million, as determined through Engineering's review.

3. Other Reserve Funds

Approve the continued accrual of interest in FYE 2026 for the following reserve funds, with funding levels (as of June 30, 2025) above their respective targets:

- R-02 Brine Line Debt Service Reserve
- R-04 Pipeline Capacity Management Reserve
- R-05 OC Future Treatment & Disposal Capacity Reserve

4. Surplus Allocation

From the projected \$3,834,230 surplus for FYE 2025:

- Transfer \$161,694 to the R-01 Brine Line Operating Reserve to reach its target balance.
- Allocate the remaining balance to the R-07 Brine Line Replacement and Capital Investment Reserve.

MOVED, to approve the Consent Calendar as posted.

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

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. ARUNDO DONAX REMOVAL IN THE SANTA ANA RIVER BASIN HEADWATERS PROJECT (CM#2025.59)

Ian Achimore provided a presentation on the Arundo Donax Removal in the Santa Ana River Basin Headwaters Project, contained in the agenda packet on pages 45-52.

Mr. Achimore emphasized that this agenda item is a follow-up from the previous meeting, recommending that the Commission approve Change Order No. 1 to Task Order No. IERCD387-01 with Inland Empire Resource Conservation District (IERCD). This change would increase the contract amount by \$468,268, raising it from \$147,777 to a new total of \$616,045 and approve a General Services Agreement (GSA) with IERCD.

This change order would enable treatment at 14 project sites in the upper watershed. Currently, about 29% of the target vegetation (window stands) has been removed.

The proposed budget hasn't changed since previous meetings. The \$468,000 will come from Proposition 13 funding, sourced from the Santa Ana River Mitigation Bank. The fund balance was \$703,933 this summer, and if the change order is approved, about \$200,000 would remain. This balance will increase as more credits are sold.

The current GSA expires on December 31, 2027. Since the Change Order extends the project through December 31, 2029, a new GSA is required. The updated GSA replaces the term “consultant” with “partner,” per IERCD’s request to reflect a collaborative rather than contractor relationship. It also clarifies the independent status of both parties in Section 4. SAWPA’s legal counsel has reviewed and approved these changes.

Lastly, in response to a previous question: *Does the surfactant, Rainier-EA, used in this project contain PFAS?* Mr. Achimore stated, no, the surfactant is made of several active ingredients; 1) Polyoxyethylene polyol fatty acid ester, and 2) Butyl lactate. The surfactant is a formulation consisting of different combinations of Carbon (C), Hydrogen (H) and Oxygen (O). The key element in PFAS is Fluorine (F) or Fluorinated compounds. The Rainier-EA label does not mention Fluorine.

Commissioner Botello asked if the change order isn’t approved today and continues to delay, is there a risk that it might be questioned why the funds were allocated to us in the first place, given that they are not being put to use? It was noted that the funds originated from the state through Proposition 13, they are SAWPA funds. Riverside County has no control or authority over the use of funds.

Commissioner Jasmin Hall attended the meeting at 9:41 a.m., during the discussion of Agenda Item No. 6.A.

Commissioner Denis Bilodeau attended the meeting at 9:42 a.m., during the discussion of Agenda Item No. 6.B.

MOVED, to authorize the Interim General Manager to execute the following:

1. Change Order 1 to Task Order IERCD387-01, which increases the Project budget from \$147,777 to \$616,045 (a change of \$468,268), and
2. General Services Agreement (GSA) with Inland Empire Resource Conservation District (IERCD).

Result:	Adopted by Roll Call Vote (4-1)
Motion/Second:	Botello/Hall
Ayes:	Botello, Gardner, Hall, Paule
Nays:	Bilodeau
Abstentions:	None
Absent:	None

B. REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS ON GROUNDWATER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SURFACE WATER REPORTING (CM#2025.60)

Ian Achimore provided a presentation on the Request for Qualifications on Groundwater Technical Assistance and Surface Water Reporting, contained in the agenda packet on pages 85-101.

SAWPA staff is requesting approval to release a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) covering both service water and groundwater projects, on behalf of the Basin Monitoring Program Task Force. This effort is funded by 20 water agencies that are task force members.

The task force was established under the 2004 Basin Plan by the Santa Ana Regional Board to oversee watershed monitoring. It supports 20 agencies named in the regulatory document, assisting them with regulatory compliance for treatment plants and water recycling projects. The task force serves as a collaborative forum for watershed-wide efforts focused primarily on salt and nutrient pollutants (TDS and nitrogen).

The task force manages three key tasks from the Basin Plan: groundwater quality averaging in 35 groundwater zones, surface water monitoring in four Santa Ana River reaches, and a

decadal modeling exercise to estimate pollutant concentrations. The RFQ includes four monitoring projects: three for groundwater zones (data consolidation, water quality recomputation, and groundwater averaging implementation) and one for surface water monitoring in the river.

A major component is ambient water quality recomputation averaging groundwater data over 20-year periods across all wells in the zones. This has been conducted through consultants and informs regulatory decisions like permits and discharge requirements.

Mr. Achimore noted that an important task is annual data compilation, now required by the 2019 state recycled water policy, which the RFQ includes. This involves compiling data every year, rather than every few years as done previously. The RFQ also covers the annual Santa Ana River report and may include new EPA data requirements.

Proposals will be evaluated based on qualifications, understanding of the RFQ and services, and any exceptions taken. If approved, the RFQ will be released today, with proposals due by September 30, interviews in October, and consultant selection by late October or early November. There was no discussion.

MOVED, to authorize the release of the Request for Qualifications for Groundwater Technical Assistance and Surface Water Reporting services, on behalf of the Basin Monitoring Program Task Force.

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

7. **INFORMATIONAL REPORTS**

Recommendation: Receive for Information.

A. **CASH TRANSACTIONS REPORT – JUNE 2025**

Presenter: Karen Williams

B. **INTER-FUND BORROWING – JUNE 2025 (CM#2025.61)**

Presenter: Karen Williams

C. **PERFORMANCE INDICATORS/FINANCIAL REPORTING – JUNE 2025 (CM#2025.62)**

Presenter: Karen Williams

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

Presenter: Karen Williams

E. **PROJECT AGREEMENT 26 – ROUNDTABLE FUND – FINANCIAL REPORT, MAY 2025**

Presenter: Karen Williams

F. **STATE LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

Presenter: Karen Williams

G. **GENERAL MANAGER REPORT**

Karen Williams reported that SAWPA's Lobby renovations are almost complete, however, it is anticipated to hold the September 2nd meeting at Inland Empire Utilities Agency (IEUA). It is expected to hold the September 16th Commission meeting at SAWPA.

Regarding a question raised during the last meeting about commission compensation, the compensation was increased on February 4, 2025. We've already informed Commissioner Biladeau and provided him with all the relevant information, as he was the one who inquired.

H. CHAIR'S COMMENTS/REPORT

There were no Chair comment received.

I. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Paule commended Ms. Emily Fuentes on the email updates of the lobby progress and looks forward to returning to SAWPA once the work is complete. She does an excellent job keeping the commission informed about where we are in the process.

J. COMMISSIONERS' REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were no requests for future agenda items.

Chair Gardner recessed the meeting at 9:51 a.m. for Closed Session.

8. CLOSED SESSION

A. PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54957 – PUBLIC EMPLOYEE APPOINTMENT

Title: General Manager

General Counsel Thomas S. Bunn, attended the meeting at 9:55 a.m., during the discussion of Agenda Item No. 8.A.

9. CLOSED SESSION REPORT

Chair Gardner resumed the Open Session at 10:29 a.m. and announced that the Commission unanimously appointed Karen Williams as SAWPA's General Manager and designated Chair Mike Gardner to negotiate the terms of salary and compensation. Legal Counsel will draft the employment contract for consideration and approval in open session at the next Commission meeting.

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for review, Chair Gardner adjourned the meeting at 10:31 a.m.

Approved at a Regular Meeting of the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority Commission on Tuesday, September 2, 2025.

Signed by:

Mike Gardner

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Mike Gardner, Chair

Attest:

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Sara Villa

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Sara Villa, Clerk of the Board