



**Southeast
Water Coalition**

A joint powers authority to protect the Central Groundwater Basin

AGENDA
SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION
REGULAR MEETING OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY
THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2026, 12:00 p.m.

Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex
Hargitt Room
13000 Clarkdale Avenue
Norwalk, CA 90650

1. ROLL CALL

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

3. CONSENT CALENDAR

**a. SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY MINUTES
OF JANUARY 15, 2026 REGULAR MEETING**

Recommendation: Approve minutes as submitted.

**4. DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING THE WATER REPLENISHMENT
DISTRICT'S REQUEST TO JOIN THE SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION**

Albert Mendoza, AE Chair, City of Norwalk

Recommendation: Discuss the results of the Administrative Entity Ad-Hoc Subcommittee and review the Water Replenishment District's letter rescinding their request to join the Southeast Water Coalition.

**5. DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING A POLICY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY
LETTERS**

Albert Mendoza, AE Chair, City of Norwalk

Recommendation: Discuss the draft policy and letter template that would allow the Administrative Entity to collectively send correspondence without Board approval, if necessary.

**6. DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING UPDATES TO LEAD AGENCY
RESPONSIBILITIES**

Albert Mendoza, AE Chair, City of Norwalk

Recommendation: Discuss the option of updating lead agency responsibilities, such as paid staff time, a dedicated Southeast Water Coalition website, and support for management of accounting, finances and audit coordination.

7. DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION POLICIES AND JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT UPDATES

Albert Mendoza, AE Chair, City of Norwalk

Recommendation: Discuss interest in establishing formal policies such as a Reserve Policy or Transition Policy and/or formally updating the Southeast Water Coalition Joint Powers Agreement.

8. GENERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Albert Mendoza, AE Chair, City of Norwalk

Recommendation: Receive a general legislative update for relevant bills.

9. DISCUSSION REGARDING ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA WATER AGENCIES UPDATES

Albert Mendoza, AE Chair, City of Norwalk

Recommendation: Receive a general update for Association of California Water Agencies related items and upcoming events.

10. APRIL 2, 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGENDA

Albert Mendoza, AE Chair, City of Norwalk

Recommendation: Discuss the Southeast Water Coalition Board of Directors Agenda for April 2, 2026.

11. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

12. ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY MEMBER COMMENTS

On March 16, 2026, the foregoing agenda was posted in accordance with the applicable legal requirements. Regular and Adjourned Regular meeting agendas may be amended up to 72 hours and Special meeting agendas may be amended up to 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

Disability-related services are available to enable persons with a disability to participate in this meeting, consistent with the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Please contact the City of Norwalk Public Services Department at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting at (562) 929-5511.



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The next meeting of the Southeast Water Coalition Administrative Entity will be on Thursday, May 21, 2026, 12:00 p.m., at Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex, Hargitt Room, 13000 Clarkdale Avenue, Norwalk, CA 90650.



**Southeast
Water Coalition**

A joint powers authority to protect the Central Groundwater Basin

**MINUTES OF THE SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY**

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 2026
12:00 NOON**

The Regular Meeting of the Southeast Water Coalition (SEWC) Joint Powers Authority Administrative Entity (AE) was held on Thursday, January 15, 2026 at the Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex, Hargitt Room, 13000 Clarkdale Avenue, Norwalk, CA 90650. The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. by Norwalk Staff member, Albert Mendoza. At the time the meeting was called to order, a quorum of members was present.

Ms. Madeline Gallagher took attendance, and the following AE members were present:

ITEM 1 - ROLL CALL

Alvin Papa	City of Cerritos
Andrew Caraveo	City of Commerce
Dan Mueller	City of Downey
Derek Nguyen	City of Lakewood
Albert Mendoza	City of Norwalk
Michelle Tse	City of Paramount
Frank Sanchez	City of Santa Fe Springs
Chris Castillo	City of South Gate
Joanna Moreno	City of Vernon
Ray Cordero	City of Whittier

STAFF AND GUESTS ON SIGN-IN SHEET:

Sarina Morales-Choate	City of Santa Fe Springs
Hector Rodriguez	City of Santa Fe Springs
Madeline Gallagher	SEWC Staff
Nicholas Ghirelli	Richards Watson & Gershon

Jacque Koontz
Michael Jea
Paul Liu

City of Norwalk (Staff)
City of Norwalk (Staff)
Water Replenishment District

ITEM 2 – PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ITEM 3 - CONSENT CALENDAR

A motion to approve the Consent Calendar was made by Ms. Moreno and seconded by Mr. Mendoza. The motion passed by the following voice vote:

AYES: **Papa, Caraveo, Nguyen, Mendoza, Tse, Sanchez, Moreno, Cordero.**

NOES: **None.**

ABSTAIN: **Mueller, Castillo.**

ITEM 4 – DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING POTENTIAL NEW MEMBERSHIP AND CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION

Mr. Mendoza reminded AE members that at the last Board meeting, the draft letter was approved to be sent out to the approved list of cities. He provided an update that the letter was sent, but no official responses from those cities have been received.

He also noted that during the Board meeting, there was a discussion regarding improving attendance of current SEWC members and potentially implementing penalties for cities with poor attendance.

There was a discussion regarding how to improve attendance and the general consensus was to send a courtesy letter to each SEWC city wishing them a Happy New Year, reminding them who their elected SEWC Board members are, noting the dates of the meetings for 2026, updating them regarding the change in lead agency come June, and emphasizing that in order for SEWC to thrive, attendance is extremely important. AE members noted that the letter should mention that if a Board member is unable to attend the meeting, they should send their Alternate. It was brought up that this letter could be an annual letter sent at the beginning of the year to encourage attendance and provide any relevant updates to member cities of SEWC.

There was a question regarding whether this letter should go to the City Manager or City Council and it was decided that the letter should be drafted and

presented at the next Board meeting where Board members can review it and provide direction as to where the letter should be sent, if approved.

ITEM 5 – DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING THE WATER REPLENISHMENT DISTRICT'S REQUEST TO JOIN THE SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION

The discussion began with Mr. Mendoza noting that Water Replenishment District (WRD) asked about the process to apply for membership of SEWC and they submitted a formal written request to join.

While Mr. Lui from WRD was in attendance, he later recused himself to provide an opportunity for AE Members to have an open discussion regarding the request.

After general discussion, a consensus was reached that further discussion was warranted to help provide clarity and make a recommendation to the Board. To that end, an ad-hoc subcommittee consisting of representatives from the Cities of Cerritos, Paramount, Lakewood, Whittier, and Norwalk was formed. The Ad-Hoc committee's purpose was to analyze the history of WRD's involvement, weigh the pros and cons of their membership, and consider alternative options, such as non-voting status. A formal recommendation to the Board could then be presented at the April Board Meeting, after the Ad-Hoc completed its evaluation and provided a detailed report at the next AE meeting in March.

After general discussion, Mr. Cordero moved to bring an informational update regarding the Ad-Hoc Committee's findings to the AE Meeting as a Receive and File, noting that the decision on whether or not to admit WRD to SEWC as a formal member will be brought to the April Board Meeting.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Moreno and was approved by the following voice vote:

AYES: **Papa, Caraveo, Nguyen, Mendoza, Tse, Sanchez, Moreno, Cordero, Mueller, Castillo.**

NOES: **None.**

ABSTAIN: **None.**

After this discussion, Mr. Lui came back into the meeting and thanked AE members for the time and assured that if WRD becomes a member of SEWC again, there will always be a representative at the Board meeting.

Ms. Moreno, Mr. Sanchez, and Ms. Morales-Choate left the meeting.

ITEM 6 – DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING A POLICY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY LETTERS

Mr. Mendoza reminded AE members about the discussion that took place at the November AE meeting regarding the AE sending letters on behalf of SEWC without Board approval. He noted that at the December Board meeting, the Board asked the AE to draft a template letter and policy on this topic and use the Strategic Plan as a reference when drafting the letter and policy.

Staff asked if any AE members had templates or policies that they could review and it was noted that the City of Vernon may have one. Staff asked AE members to please send any relevant policies or letter templates to Ms. Gallagher.

AE members asked Staff to help draft the policy and letter and bring it to the March AE meeting for review and comments before bringing it to the April Board Meeting.

ITEM 7 – FEBRUARY 5, 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGENDA

Mr. Mendoza opened up a discussion to confirm what items would be on the Board Agenda, and the following items were agreed upon:

1. New Membership Update and Improvement of Attendance of Current Membership
2. Receive and File Update for WRD's Request to Join SEWC
3. Potentially an ACWA Update

ITEM 8 – WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None.

ITEM 9 - ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Mendoza provided a brief update regarding the ACWA membership, noting that there is an ACWA meeting on January 30th where SEWC membership will be voted on. Mr. Cordero asked if there was a link to join the meeting or if someone should be there to represent SEWC.

Mr. Mendoza and Staff also noted that the February Board meeting will be in a different building, but it will be at the same address. There will be signage and Staff helping direct Board members to the correct room.

ITEM 10 - ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:27 p.m.

The next regular Southeast Water Coalition Administrative Entity Meeting will be held on March 19, 2026 at 12:00 p.m. at the Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex, Hargitt Room, 13000 Clarkdale Avenue, Norwalk, CA 90650.

Chair

Date



**SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY
AGENDA REPORT**

Date: March 19, 2026
To: Southeast Water Coalition Administrative Entity
From: Albert Mendoza, AE Chair, City of Norwalk

**Subject: DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING THE WATER REPLENISHMENT
DISTRICT'S REQUEST TO JOIN THE SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION**

Discussion:

At the December Board Meeting, Staff and Administrative Entity (AE) members presented updated materials and a draft outreach letter to support new membership of the Southeast Water Coalition (SEWC). Following the meeting, the Water Replenishment District (WRD) reached out to the AE Chair inquiring about the membership application process and noting their interest in joining SEWC as a voting member.

Norwalk Staff replied with the Application Process One-Pager and Member Benefits One-Pager. In response, WRD submitted an official written request to join SEWC signed by the General Manager. At the January AE Meeting, members discussed the letter from WRD to determine the recommendation for Board consideration. There was a consensus among the AE group that WRD's application should be discussed further.

To help provide clarity and to develop a recommendation to the Board, an AE Ad-Hoc subcommittee was formed consisting of representatives from the cities of Cerritos, Norwalk, Lakewood, Paramount, and Whittier. On February 12, 2026, the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee met to discuss and analyzed the history of WRD's involvement, considered all options, and weighed the advantages and disadvantages of renewed membership.

On February 23, 2026, SEWC received a second letter from WRD rescinding their request to join. The purpose of this item is to discuss the results provided by the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee and to review WRD's latest letter.

Recommendation: Discuss the results of the Administrative Entity Ad-Hoc Subcommittee and review the Water Replenishment District's letter rescinding their request to join the Southeast Water Coalition.

Attachments:

1. WRD's Letter to SEWC dated February 23, 2026



DIRECTORS
SERGIO CALDERON, PRESIDENT
ROBERT KATHERMAN, VICE PRESIDENT
JOY LANGFORD, SECRETARY
VERA ROBLES DEWITT, TREASURER
JOHN D. S. ALLEN, DIRECTOR

STEPHAN TUCKER, MBA, PE, PMP, GENERAL MANAGER

February 23, 2026

Councilwoman Ana Valencia
Chair, Southeast Water Coalition
Norwalk City Hall
12700 Norwalk Blvd.,
Norwalk, CA 90650

RE: Water Replenishment District's Application for Membership in the Southeast Water Coalition

Dear Chairwoman Valencia,

I am writing on behalf of the Water Replenishment District's (WRD) Board of Directors to formally rescind our request for consideration for membership in the Southeast Water Coalition (SEWC).

This decision does not reflect any change in our respect for SEWC's mission or the important work of its member agencies. We continue to value the coalition's efforts to protect and improve the regional water supply, prevent groundwater contamination, and promote sound water policy for the communities we collectively serve.

WRD remains committed to regional collaboration and looks forward to opportunities to engage constructively with SEWC and its member agencies where appropriate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S. Calderon", is written over a horizontal line.

Director Sergio Calderon
Board President
Water Replenishment District

CC: SEWC Board of Directors
Cerritos - Frank Aurelio Yokoyama, Mayor
Commerce - Kevin Lainez
Downey - Horacio Ortiz
Lakewood - Todd Rogers
Paramount - Isabel Aguayo
Pico Rivera - Andrew Lara
Santa Fe Springs - Joe Angel Zamora
South Gate - Maria del Pilar Avalos
Vernon - Melissa Ybarra
Whittier - Octavio Martinez



**SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY
AGENDA REPORT**

Date: March 19, 2026
To: Southeast Water Coalition Administrative Entity
From: Albert Mendoza, AE Chair, City of Norwalk

**Subject: DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING A POLICY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE
ENTITY LETTERS**

Discussion:

At the November Administrative Entity (AE) meeting, there was a discussion regarding the ability for the AE to write and send letters on behalf of the Southeast Water Coalition (SEWC) without prior Board approval. The issue arose specifically as a result of concerns surrounding state proposed public health goals for contaminants in drinking water and associated deadlines for public comment. Such important deadlines could pass prior to the next regular Board meeting. AE Members proposed that the AE group could develop a policy to include a standardized template for future letters for the Board's consideration. The policy would outline SEWC's goals and purpose and provide direction on when and how the AE can act without Board approval.

Board Members requested that the AE draft a template letter aligned with SEWC Strategic Plan goals. The purpose of this agenda item is to review the draft letter template and policy with the intention of presenting them at a future Board meeting for approval.

Recommendation: Discuss the draft policy and letter template that would allow the Administrative Entity to collectively send correspondence without Board approval, if necessary.

Attachments:

1. AE Expedited Correspondence Policy
2. AE Expedited Correspondence Draft Letter Template

ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY EXPEDITED CORRESPONDENCE POLICY

Approved Date: xx/xx/xx

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework for the Administrative Entity (AE) to draft and send official correspondence on behalf of the Southeast Water Coalition (SEWC) when a deadline occurs before the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The Southeast Water Coalition occasionally faces time-sensitive regulatory and legislative deadlines, such as public comment periods for health goals or water quality standards. This policy will help ensure that SEWC remains an active and influential voice in regional water policy.

2. Strategic Plan Alignment

All correspondence issued under this policy must directly support the SEWC Strategic Plan Goals, specifically:

- **Goal 1: Groundwater Protection** – SEWC will provide leadership and collaborate to protect and sustain the Central Basin groundwater supply of the SEWC region
- **Goal 2: Advocacy and Communications** – SEWC will track, develop, coordinate, and communicate input into water policy affecting the SEWC region
- **Goal 3: Funding** – SEWC will seek funding for water resource projects and programs benefiting the SEWC region

Additionally, any correspondence sent on behalf of SEWC should align with the following values to guide the internal and external interactions:

- **Integrity** - the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles
- **Open communication** – we will communicate in an unreserved and objective fashion
- **Collaboration** – we will work jointly to achieve the Coalition's goals
- **Public stewardship of resources** – we will carefully and prudently manage the resources that are entrusted to us
- **Transparency** – our Coalition activities will be visible and information/deliberations accessible

3. Scope of Authority

The AE is authorized to act without prior Board approval only when:

1. **Time Constraint:** A formal deadline (e.g., public comment period) expires before the next Board meeting.
2. **Consistency:** The position taken in the letter is consistent with established SEWC positions, previous Board-approved resolutions, or the Strategic Plan.
3. **Non-Binding:** The letter does not commit SEWC to unplanned financial expenditures or new legal obligations.

4. Process and Notification

To ensure transparency and uniformity, the AE shall follow these steps:

- **Drafting:** The AE will use the Standardized Correspondence Template to draft letters.
- **Review:** If there is sufficient time before a deadline, the draft must be reviewed and approved by a majority vote at the next AE Meeting. If the deadline does not provide sufficient time for the AE to review and approve a letter at a regular meeting, a draft can be given final review and approval in writing by at least three AE members, including the Chair or the Vice Chair.
- **Signature:** The letter must be signed by the Chair (or the Vice-Chair in the Chair's absence) and sent prior to the deadline.
- **Notification:** A copy of the sent letter must be emailed to the full AE and Board of Directors within 48 hours of transmission.
- **Ratification:** The letter will be included as an informational item at the following Board meeting for formal record-keeping and discussion.

ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY EXPEDITED CORRESPONDENCE DRAFT LETTER TEMPLATE

[Date]

[Recipient Name/Agency]

[Address]

RE: [Subject - e.g., Comments on Proposed Public Health Goals for Drinking Water]

Dear [Name/Title],

On behalf of the Southeast Water Coalition (SEWC), we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments regarding [Subject Matter].

SEWC is a Joint Powers Authority with 11-member cities created in 1991, which is dedicated to [insert relevant mission/strategic goal - e.g., ensuring a reliable, safe, and affordable water supply for our region]. Our strategic goals prioritize the protection of public health through scientifically sound and operationally feasible regulatory frameworks.

SEWC has reviewed the proposed [Contaminant/Regulation] and wishes to highlight the following concerns/recommendations:

- [Point 1: Impact on member agencies]
- [Point 2: Technical or feasibility concerns]
- [Point 3: Suggested timeline or alternative approach]

Our agency is committed to working with [Agency Name] to ensure that [insert relevant mission/strategic goal/outcome of letter].

We can be reached at [email and/or phone] for any questions you may have. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this important topic.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Administrative Entity Chair
Southeast Water Coalition



**SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY
AGENDA REPORT**

Date: March 19, 2026
To: Southeast Water Coalition Administrative Entity
From: Albert Mendoza, AE Chair, City of Norwalk

Subject: DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING UPDATES TO LEAD AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

Discussion:

During a recent lead agency transition meeting, several strategies were identified to streamline operations and reduce the administrative burden on the lead agency over the two-year term. The purpose of this item is to evaluate the feasibility, interest, and available budget for the following proposals:

1. Staffing Support: Providing paid staff time for dedicated staff within the lead agency.
2. Southeast Water Coalition (SEWC) Website: Establishing a standalone SEWC website to host all public information and meeting agendas, independent of the lead agency's site.
3. Financial Management: Engaging an external consultant to oversee accounting, finances, audits, and disbursements to reduce the responsibilities of the lead agency's internal finance department and reduce the time for the transition, reconciliation and close-out/start up from one lead agency to the next lead agency. This could include the development of SEWC Board-approved accounting, procurement, and other procedure/policies, as well as having its own accounting software and checking account.

Recommendation: Discuss the option of updating lead agency responsibilities, such as paid staff time, a dedicated Southeast Water Coalition website, and support for management of accounting, finances and audit coordination.



**SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY
AGENDA REPORT**

Date: March 19, 2026
To: Southeast Water Coalition Administrative Entity
From: Albert Mendoza, AE Chair, City of Norwalk

**Subject: DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION
POLICIES AND JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT UPDATES**

Discussion:

During the February Board Meeting, a discussion took place regarding potential updates to the Southeast Water Coalition (SEWC) Joint Powers Agreement (JPA). Additionally, there were past conversations regarding the development of formal policies, such as a Reserve Policy or a Transition Policy. The Reserve Policy would provide a safeguard to SEWC's financial health, and a Transition Policy would help standardize the transitional process between lead agencies.

The purpose of this agenda item is to further discuss these topics and determine the level of interest in moving forward with such updates and discuss the logistics of these possible changes.

Recommendation: Discuss interest in establishing formal policies such as a Reserve Policy or Transition Policy and/or formally updating the Southeast Water Coalition Joint Powers Agreement.