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 16, 2025 12:00 NOON

The Regular Meeting of the Southeast Water Coalition Joint Powers Authority Administrative Entity was held in-person at the Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex, Hargitt Room, 13000 Clarkdale Avenue, Norwalk, CA 90650. The meeting was called to order at 12:01 p.m. by AE Chair Glen Kau. At the time the meeting was called to order, a quorum of members was present.

Ms. Madeline Anderson took attendance, and the following Administrative Entity members were present:

ITEM 1 - ROLL CALL

Jamie Morales	City of Cerritos
Andrew Caraveo	City of Commerce
Dan Mueller	City of Downey
Derek Nguyen	City of Lakewood
Glen Kau, AE Chair	City of Norwalk
Michelle Tse	City of Paramount
Sarina Morales-Choate	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:

Madeline Anderson	SEWC Staff
Nicholas Ghirelli	RWG
Jacque Koontz	City of Norwalk (Staff)
Michael Jea	City of Norwalk (Staff)
Alvin Papa	City of Cerritos

John Bednarski	Metropolitan Water District
Kim Wilson	Metropolitan Water District
Elisa Mendez	Metropolitan Water District

ITEM 2 – PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ITEM 3 - CONSENT CALENDAR

The consent calendar was approved by the following voice vote:

AYES:	**Caraveo, Kau, Castillo, Moreno, Cordero**
NOES:	**None.**
ABSTAIN:	**Morales, Mueller, Tse, Morales-Choate**

ITEM 4 - DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING UPDATE ON SEWC LETTER TO THE WATER REPLENISHMENT DISTRICT (WRD) BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BAC)

Mr. Kau began by providing the context of the letter to WRD and thanking everyone for the hard work. He noted that on December 19, 2024, the letter was emailed to WRD followed by a hard copy. Mr. Kau noted that he has yet to receive any response. There were no further comments.

Derek Nguyen arrived at 12:04.

ITEM 5 – DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING PURE WATER SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PROGRAM OVERVIEW PRESENTATION BY THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

John Bednarski, Interim Assistant General Manager, Engineering Services Group, began by introducing Kimberly Wilson, Conveyance Team Manager, Program Management, and Elisa Mendez, Principal Public Affairs Representative.

Mr. Bednarski then begun the Pure Water Southern California Program presentation, which started with outlining the history and purpose of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWDSC). MWDSC is the nation's largest wholesale water provider, which supports a $1.6 trillion regional economy and delivers water to 19 million people. The district primarily sells to wholesalers or agencies. His presentation covered several aspects, including the program overview, collaboration with SEWC cities, project schedules, funding, ongoing activities, and outreach efforts.

The presentation also discussed the impact of climate change, emphasizing that Southern California faces prolonged droughts followed by heavy rainfall. MWDSC is working to ensure water resource reliability through initiatives such as the

CAMP4W program, which assesses water supply reliability and evaluates future projects.

Mr. Bednarski introduced the Pure Water Program, a multi-step process aimed at reclaiming and purifying used water in Los Angeles County. This initiative involves collecting and treating wastewater, purifying it through advanced technologies such as membrane bioreactors, reverse osmosis, and disinfection, and ultimately using it for groundwater replenishment and other applications. Future objectives include direct delivery to water treatment plants and integrating treated water directly into the potable supply.

The benefits of the Pure Water Program are significant, including treating up to 150 million gallons per day—enough water for 1.5 million people. It is one of the largest programs of its kind globally, following the example of a similar initiative in Orange County. The program enhances water resiliency, replenishes groundwater basins, creates a local water supply, improves water quality, repurposes an untapped wastewater source, supports economic growth, and generates local jobs.

Several partners are involved in this project, including but not limited to, the Upper San Gabriel Valley "Municipal Water District", Central Basin MWD, Long Beach Utilities, Three Valleys MWD, LA Dept. of Water and Power, Water Replenishment District of Southern California, Southern Nevada Water Authority, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, SoCal Edison, and LA County Public Works.

SEWC cities are centrally located in the project's alignment, making collaboration essential. Mr. Bednarski discussed the potential delivery of pure water to different regions in Southern California. He also provided a project timeline, stating that the draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) would be released in April, with public comments to follow. He noted that within 12 months, the MWDSC Board aims to certify environmental documents, adopt the program, and integrate it into the capital investment plan. Operations are expected to begin in the early 2030s. The project has secured $80 million in state funding and multiple federal grants, including investments from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation "USBR".

Upcoming milestones include a state climate bond initiative, finalizing the conveyance and treatment facility plans, evaluating phased implementation, continuing demonstration testing for direct potable reuse (DPR), developing agreements with member agencies and partners, and finalizing a grant agreement with the USBR. Public outreach is also underway, with tours and surveys conducted to gauge community perceptions.

Mr. Bednarski highlighted workforce development opportunities, as the project is expected to generate 50,000 new jobs.

During the Q&A session, Mr. Cordero inquired about who would manage operations once the conveyance system was established, to which Mr. Bednarski

responded that MWDSC would oversee the entire pipeline. Mr. Kau asked about replenishing aquifers, and Mr. Bednarski emphasized the importance of collaborating with watermasters to avoid disrupting operational units.

Mr. Papa asked about the CAMP4W program and the shift from imported water to local storage, noting potential sizing issues and electrification challenges. Mr. Bednarski explained that a dedicated MWDSC team assessed optimal infrastructure sizing and recommended working through member agencies for further discussions. Mr. Mueller asked whether the Central Basin MWD would address high levels of PFAS and other contaminants. Mr. Bednarski confirmed ongoing discussions with Central Basin regarding a planned five-million-gallon-per-day drop and stated that the reverse osmosis protocols would effectively remove PFAS.

Mr. Nguyen asked why Orange County was not listed as a stakeholder or partner, and Mr. Bednarski explained that Orange County's Groundwater Replenishment System is highly successful, and they do not need additional water at this time. Mr. Papa followed up with concerns about PFAS studies and Mr. Bednarski acknowledged that most contaminants would be removed during treatment, and injection wells require close coordination with WRDSC to avoid disturbing underground plumes. The draft environmental review will include a dedicated section addressing PFAS management.

Mr. Bednarski concluded by providing contact information for further inquiries, offering a site visit, and thanking attendees for their collaboration.

ITEM 6 - DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING A FORMAT CHANGE TO THE AGENDA REPORTS

Mr. Kau began by providing context regarding the current Staff Report format and the format that the City of Norwalk uses for their Staff Reports, noting that the main difference between the formats was simply where on the page the recommendations were located. The current version has recommendations at the top of the Staff Reports and the City of Norwalk Staff Reports have recommendations at the bottom of the page.

Mr. Nguyen said since it doesn't really make a substantial change, he is happy to support the motion to help Norwalk, as they are the AE Chair. The general consensus was that if a format is simpler and easier for the lead agency, it makes sense to use that format for SEWC Staff Reports.

Nick Ghirelli confirmed that no motion was necessary, as there was general consent across the members that this change should be implemented.

ITEM 7 – FEBRUARY 6, 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGENDA

Mr. Mueller mentioned it would be valuable for the SEWC Board to receive the same Pure Water Southern California Program presentation that the AE received. The following list was suggested for the upcoming SEWC Board Meeting: Pure Water Presentation

- Potential Update of WRDSC
- Potential Update on letter to DDW
- Status update on Budget

ITEM 8 – WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None.

ITEM 9 - ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Cordero offered support regarding the California fires, noting that there is a link on ca.gov that provides assistance for anyone who has been affected by the fires. He encouraged SEWC members to send this link to anyone who was affected by the fires.

Mr. Nguyen asked if anyone started on the cross connection plan. Ms. Moreno said she has a template and can share with everyone.

Mr. Nguyen also reminded SEWC members that the Public Health Goals Report is due July 1st.

ITEM 10 - ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:06 p.m.

The next regular Southeast Water Coalition Administrative Entity Meeting will be held on March 20, 2025 at 12:00 p.m. at the Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex, Hargitt Room, 13000 Clarkdale Avenue, Norwalk, CA 90650.

Chair 7.27.26 Date