Southeast Water Coalition
A joint powers authority to protect the Central Groundwater Basin

MINUTES OF THE SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION
REGULAR MEETING OF THE POLICY BOARD
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2025, 7:00 p.m.

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Southeast Water Coalition Joint Powers Authority was held on Thursday, December 4, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at the Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex, Sproul Room, 13000 Clarkdale Avenue, Norwalk CA 90650. Chair Ana Valencia called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. At the time the meeting was called to order, a quorum of members was present.

Ms. Madeline Gallagher took attendance virtually, and the following Board of Directors members were present:

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Frank Aurelio Yokoyama	City of Cerritos
Kevin Lainez	City of Commerce
Todd Rogers	City of Lakewood
Ana Valencia	City of Norwalk
Isabel Aguayo	City of Paramount
Joe Angel Zamora	City of Santa Fe Springs
Maria del Pilar Avalos	City of South Gate
Melissa Ybarra	City of Vernon
Octavio Martinez	City of Whittier

STAFF AND GUESTS ON SIGN-IN SHEET:

Andrew Caraveo	City of Commerce – AE
Dan Mueller	City of Downey – AE
Derek Nguyen	City of Lakewood – AE
Albert Mendoza	AE Chair, City of Norwalk
Michelle Tse	City of Paramount – AE
Joanna Moreno	City of Vernon – AE
Ray Cordero	City of Whittier – AE
Jacque Koontz	City of Norwalk Staff
Michael Jea	City of Norwalk Staff
Patricia Santana	City of Norwalk Staff

Madeline Gallagher	SEWC Staff (virtual)
Nicholas Ghirelli	Richards Watson & Gershon
Paul Liu	Water Replenishment District (WRD)
Lorraine Avila Moore	City of Lynwood

ITEM 2 – PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

Director Valencia introduced two guests present at the meeting, Paul Liu, Assistant General Manager at WRD, and Lorraine Avila Moore, Mayor Pro Tem City of Lynwood.

ITEM 3 - CONSENT CALENDAR

Director Lainez moved to approve the consent calendar.

The motion was seconded by Director Zamora and was approved by the following voice vote:

AYES:	**Lainez, Rogers, Valencia, Aguayo, Zamora, Avalos, Ybarra, Martinez.**
NOES:	**None.**
ABSTAIN:	**None.**

ITEM 4 - DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING PROGRAM MANAGEMENT SUPPORT PROPOSAL

Mr. Mendoza reported that the contract for project management support ended in November and the action proposed by AE members and legal counsel was an extension through an amendment. Mr. Mendoza also noted that the last time SEWC went through an RFP for program management, only one proposal was received. He also noted that the proposal brought forward today is for the time period of 2 years and 7 months, ending in June 2028 to align with the fiscal year and budget. There was a brief discussion and it was clarified that as part of this amendment, there is an option to extend the contract for two years, which would involve another contract and updated terms.

There were no further questions.

Director Avalos moved to approve the following:

a) Approve an amendment to the Professional services agreement with Koa

Consulting, Inc for Program Management Support, for an amount not-to exceed $4,960 per month, for a contract term up to June 30, 2028, with the option to extend services for two additional years; and authorize the Board Chair to execute the agreement, provided there is funding in the budget, on behalf of Southeast Water Coalition, in a form approved by the Southeast Water Coalition attorney.

The motion was seconded by Director Ybarra and was approved by the following voice vote:

AYES:	**Lainez, Rogers, Valencia, Aguayo, Zamora, Avalos, Ybarra, Martinez.**
NOES:	**None.**
ABSTAIN:	**None.**

ITEM 5 - DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT AND PROFESSIONAL AUDIT SERVICES

Mr. Mendoza noted that an RFQ to solicit professional services for the annual audit of SEWC financial statements for fiscal year (FY) 2023/24 was posted on October 18, 2024 and SEWC received one quotation via the solicitation process from Price Paige & Company (Price Paige). The SEWC members determined that Price Paige was qualified and recommended selecting the firm in the amount of $8,280.

Mr. Mendoza provided an update noting that the FY 2023/24 audit has been issued in a report dated September 17, 2025. He also noted that Price and Paige's contract agreement will expire December 30, 2025. To maintain momentum and complete the annual audit of SEWC financial statements for FY 2024/25, the City of Norwalk requested a proposal from Price Paige. The proposed cost is the same amount of $8,280.

Director Rogers moved to approve the following:

a) Receive and file the audit report of financial statements for Fiscal Year 2023/24; and,

b) Award a professional services agreement to Price Paige & Company to prepare the annual audit of financial statements for Fiscal Year 2024/25, for an amount not-to-exceed $8,280, for a contract term up to December 31, 2026, with the option to extend services for one additional year; and authorize the Board Chair to execute the agreement, provided there is funding in the budget, on behalf of Southeast Water Coalition, in a form

approved by the Southeast Water Coalition attorney.

The motion was seconded by Director Avalos and was approved by the following voice vote:

AYES: **Lainez, Rogers, Valencia, Aguayo, Zamora, Avalos, Ybarra, Martinez.**

NOES: **None.**

ABSTAIN: **None.**

ITEM 6 – DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING POTENTIAL NEW MEMBERSHIP OF THE SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION

Mr. Mendoza reported that during the previous Board meeting, Board members requested the attached items, including the draft outreach letter, updated map, list of cities, and overall invitation packet for potential new members.

Director Valencia invited Ms. Moore from the City of Lynwood to provide any comments or feedback on the invitation packet and she said it was a great start. She noted that she liked the idea of the letter and that everything looked well thought out and planned. She had no questions or other comments.

Director Martinez brought up that in addition to inviting new members, he would encourage people who are current members to be in attendance more often. This opened a discussion regarding how to encourage better participation. One suggestion was to make the Board meeting monthly, but it was clarified that the AE members meet on the months that the Board does not, so SEWC as an organization does meet monthly. Another suggestion was some sort of penalty for missing three meetings in a row.

The consensus was that the purpose of this agenda item was not to discuss current membership, but that AE should explore solutions for higher member engagement and attendance and discuss it at a future Board meeting.

Director Avalos moved to approve the following:

a) Send the outreach letter and overall invitation packet to the list of potential new members.

The motion was seconded by Director Lainez and was approved by the following voice vote:

AYES: **Lainez, Rogers, Valencia, Aguayo, Zamora, Avalos, Ybarra, Martinez.**

NOES: **None.**

ABSTAIN: **None.**

ITEM 7 – DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Mr. Mendoza provided a general update regarding the Strategic Plan, which was discussed at past meetings. He stated that at the previous Board Meeting, Board members pointed out that the names of Board and AE members needed to be updated, but that overall, there were no major changes needed at this time. He also confirmed that AE members conducted a review and provided the updates to the Strategic Plan. There was a question regarding major changes to the Plan and it was confirmed that no major changes were made. Only minor changes were made to wording to ensure accuracy and names were updated to reflect present Board and AE members.

Director Avalos moved to approve the following:

a) Review and approve recommended updates to the 2017 SEWC Strategic Plan.

The motion was seconded by Director Martinez and was approved by the following voice vote:

AYES: **Lainez, Rogers, Valencia, Aguayo, Zamora, Avalos, Ybarra, Martinez.**

NOES: **None.**

ABSTAIN: **None.**

ITEM 8 – DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING A POLICY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY LETTERS

Mr. Mendoza provided context that during the last AE meeting, there was a discussion around whether or not the AE members were allowed to send letters or comments on behalf of the SEWC without Board Approval. He noted that the only time this kind of action by the AE would be relevant is in the case that there is a time-sensitive opportunity to write a letter or comment on something that would prevent the AE from being able to bring the matter to the Board first.

Director Rogers noted that most cities have a similar policy. He also noted that if the issue is time sensitive and SEWC does not have an opportunity to meet, there is also the option of holding an urgent meeting.

Mr. Nguyen helped provide context regarding the benefits of this letter and

Director Valencia asked the Chair and Staff to discuss this matter with the AE further and bring back a template.

Director Rogers advised that AE members use the Strategic Plan as a template to guide which topics and positions are relevant to the SEWC.

The general consensus was for the AE to draft a template letter aligned with strategic goals. This draft will be presented at a future meeting for formal review and potential policy adoption.

Director Ybarra moved to approve the following:

a) Draft a policy and letter that would allow the Administrative Entity to collectively send correspondence without Board approval, if necessary.

The motion was seconded by Director Avalos and was approved by the following voice vote:

AYES:	**Lainez, Rogers, Valencia, Aguayo, Zamora, Avalos, Ybarra, Martinez.**
NOES:	**None.**
ABSTAIN:	**None.**

ITEM 9 – GENERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mr. Mendoza introduced Mr. Ghirelli to provide an update on the PFAS-related bills that SEWC has been tracking.

Mr. Ghirelli reported that Assembly Bill 794 ("AB-794") Assembly Bill 794, regarding emergency regulations setting MCLs did not pass out of the Assembly prior to the legislative deadline and was placed in the inactive file. He also mentioned that is unclear whether it will be re-considered in 2026 as a two-year bill.

He then reported on Senate Bill 454 ("SB-454") which would create the PFAS Mitigation Fund, to be managed by the State Water Board. He noted that the Governor vetoed SB 454 because it did not include a dedicated funding source.

Mr. Ghirelli also noted that another bill, AB 682, was receiving press coverage, which would prohibit the use of certain PFAS chemicals in a variety of consumer products sold or distributed in California by January 1, 2028. He confirmed that the Governor vetoed AB 682 due to concerns that it would affect the "availability of affordable options in cooking products "

Last, Mr. Ghirelli concluded his report with HR 1267, which proposes the Water Systems PFAS Liability Protection Act. Mr. Ghirelli noted that this bill is still pending in Congress with no action being taken to date by the House of Representatives. He stated that there will likely be more action from EPA.

There were no further questions.

ITEM 10 – DISCUSSION REGARDING REGULATORY UPDATES

Mr. Mendoza provided an update on two regulatory updates, including the revised Notification Levels and Response Levels for PFAS and the proposed Public Health Goals (PHGs) for 1,4-Dioxane. He noted that the Division of Drinking Water (DDW) officially issued new and revised Notification Levels (NLs) and Response Levels (RLs) for four specific PFAS compounds, which resulted in lower NLs for PFOS and PFOA.

Mr. Nguyen added more context on these regulatory updates, noting that the PFAS NLs are more stringent than they were previously, which is why it is important to bring to the attention of SEWC members. He also noted that cities should know whether or not there is 1,4-Dioxane present in their systems. He also mentioned that the PHGs are not necessarily aligned with what cities can do in terms of mitigation. Lastly, Mr. Nguyen stated that law firms will be suing polluters who are contributing to 1,4-Dioxane pollution, similar to PFAS, noting that attorneys may be reaching out shortly to any affected cities.

Director Valencia asked if these regulatory updates presented any red flags and Mr. Nguyen answered that there are no real red flags based on the updates. He noted that the intention is to bring more attention to the regulations and compliance. He also mentioned that notification levels were lowered, so the Board members will likely be notified. Mr. Nguyen noted that 1,4 Dioxine is a contaminant coming on the scenes soon and he believes California is trying to get ahead with PHGs, which tends to lead to future MCLs. He noted that 1,4 Dioxane is a synthetic chemical that is in cleaning products and is unhealthy in drinking water.

ITEM 11 – BOARD OF DIRECTORS COMMENTS

None.

Director Frank Aurelio Yokoyama entered the room.

ITEM 12 – ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY CHAIR/LEAD AGENCY COMMENTS

Mr. Mendoza provided a brief update on SEWC's application for ACWA

membership. He noted that to apply, SEWC needed to provide the FY 2023-24 Audit, which was discussed and received and filed today. He confirmed that Norwalk Staff will be officially applying for membership soon.

ITEM 13 - ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

The next regular Southeast Water Coalition Board Meeting will be on February 5, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at the Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex, Sproul Room, 13000 Clarkdale Avenue, Norwalk CA 90650.

Ana Valencia

Ana Valencia, Chair

2/5/26

Date