


**MINUTES OF THE SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION**
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE POLICY BOARD**
**THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 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, June 5, 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 7:05 p.m. At the time the meeting was called to order, a quorum of members was present.

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

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

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| Frank Aurelio Yokoyama | City of Cerritos |
| Kevin Lainez | City of Commerce |
| Horacio Ortiz | City of Downey |
| Todd Rogers | City of Lakewood |
| Ana Valencia | City of Norwalk |
| Isabel Aguayo | City of Paramount |
| Andrew Lara | City of Pico Rivera |
| 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:**

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| Jennifer Hong | City of Cerritos – Board Alternate |
| Andrew Caraveo | City of Commerce – AE |
| Derek Nguyen | City of Lakewood – AE |
| Michelle Tse | City of Paramount – AE |
| Gladis Deras | City of South Gate – AE |
| Joanna Moreno | City of Vernon – AE |
| Ray Cordero | City of Whittier – AE |
| | City of Norwalk Staff |

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| Glen Kau | AE Chair, City of Norwalk |
| Jacque Koontz | City of Norwalk Staff |
| Michael Jea | City of Norwalk Staff |
| Madeline Anderson | SEWC Staff |
| Nicholas Ghirelli | Richards Watson & Gershon |

## ITEM 2 – PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

## ITEM 3 - CONSENT CALENDAR

Director Rogers moved to approve the consent calendar.

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

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| **AYES:** | **Yokoyama, Lainez, Ortiz, Rogers, Valencia, Aguayo, Lara, Zamora, Avalos, Martinez** |
| **NOES:** | **None.** |
| **ABSTAIN:** | **Ybarra (minutes only)** |

## ITEM 4 - DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING SEWC FY 2025-26 BUDGET

Mr. Kau presented the SEWC FY 2025-26 Budget and highlighted line items. Director Avalos asked what the annual fees are for each city, and it was confirmed to be $10,000 per the bylaws, noted by Mr. Kau.

There were no further questions.

Director Martinez made a motion to approve the SEWC FY 2025-26 Budget, as presented.

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

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

## ITEM 5 - DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING POTENTIAL NEW MEMBERSHIP OF SEWC

Mr. Kau initiated a discussion regarding the formalization of a written process for admitting new members into SEWC. This prompted Director Avalos to question why cities like Lynwood, which operates five wells and has expressed interest in joining, are not currently members. She emphasized the strength in numbers and advocated for proactively reaching out to other cities with wells that are not part of SEWC, such as Bell and Huntington Park. To facilitate this, she proposed sending a formal letter to these prospective members. Director Lainez suggested the creation of a concise "one-pager" to clearly articulate the work and benefits of SEWC membership, noting it would be a valuable tool if one does not already exist.

Mr. Ghirelli offered context on the JPA and its initial purpose. Following this, Director Zamora requested a visual aid, asking staff to present a map of the SEWC's boundaries to strategically identify and target potential new member cities for outreach. This led to an action item for the staff to prepare a map illustrating the boundaries and to create a one-page document detailing the benefits of joining SEWC.

Director Rogers recommended a review of the organization's bylaws. He stressed the importance of ensuring that the SEWC's mission and strategic plan are aligned with its current priorities, especially in light of potential expansion. Mr. Ghirelli agreed with the value of this suggestion, noting that while the existing mission and plan are intentionally broad, it would be worthwhile to re-examine them before incorporating new cities into SEWC.

## ITEM 6 – GENERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mr. Ghirelli of RWG led the general legislative update, reminding the Board that SEWC has been tracking three bills related to PFAS. He then provided updated information on the bills.

He reminded them that Assembly Bill 794 ("AB-794") would authorize the State Water Board to issue emergency regulations setting maximum contaminant levels ("MCL") for primary and secondary drinking water standards and require the State Water Board to adopt an emergency regulation and initiate a primary drinking water standard for PFAS by December 31, 2026. He noted that since the bill was introduced, the EPA noted they were going to extend the compliance deadline for a couple of years. So in response to that, there was an amendment to the bill that stated any emergency regulation couldn't be earlier than that compliance deadline. He also confirmed that this bill is still in assembly.

Senate Bill 454 ("SB-454") would create the PFAS Mitigation Fund ("Fund"), to be

managed by the State Water Board. The Fund's contents would be used to assist local public entities like water suppliers and wastewater operators in covering the costs of treating PFAS contaminated water to remove the forever chemicals. The update that Mr. Ghirelli provided on this bill is that it has been passed in the Senate and is now going to the assembly.

House of Representatives Bill 1267 ("HR-1267") proposes the "Water Systems PFAS Liability Protection Act," which would exempt certain entities from liability for release of PFAS substances under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act ("CERCLA"). Mr. Ghirelli noted that this bill is still pending in Congress.

There were no further questions.

## ITEM 7 – DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING PFAS UPDATE

Mr. Kau noted that this item is related to PFAS related activities and asked Mr. Ghirelli to kindly provide an update on PFAS. He noted that the first round of checks were sent out from the 3M lawsuit on May 16th. He also confirmed that the next installment will come later this year. Mr. Ghirelli then noted that the Dupont Settlement is smaller and will be distributed in the next few months. The second set of two settlements that Mr. Ghirelli addressed were Tyco and BASF. He noted that the deadline to submit claims for these settlements was April 2025 and they are still in the claims review process.

Mr. Kau and Ms. Koontz confirmed that they reached out to the PFAS lawyers to see if they could provide an update at a future meeting.

## ITEM 8 – BOARD OF DIRECTORS COMMENTS

Director Valencia noted that Norwalk suggested doing a tour of the Metropolitan Water District's Carson facility, confirming that the only date that would work for Norwalk is July 23rd. She also confirmed that Norwalk staff is seeking 10 people for a private tour, otherwise SEWC members need to go with the public. She asked everyone to please take a look at their schedules and coordinate accordingly.

Director Avalos invited everyone to South Gate for a street fair on Tweedy Mile, which was scheduled for 6pm the following day until Sunday.

Director Martinez noted that he attended the WRD meeting and provided a general report of what occurred. He reiterated that cities must directly respond to constituents. He informed Board members that WRD arbitrarily ended up offering a 3.8% increase instead of their initial 4% increase without providing

justification for how they arrived at 3.8%, which ultimately passed. Lastly, he noted that the Budget Advisory Committee will meet in the next few weeks.

Director Lara noted that the city of Pico Rivera changed the terms of how they changed water rates by tying water rates to CPI.

There were no further comments.

## ITEM 9 – ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY CHAIR/LEAD AGENCY COMMENTS

None.

## ITEM 10 - ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

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

Ana M. Valencia
Ana Valencia, Chair

8/7/25
Date