

State of California
Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board

Minutes of the April 25, 2025 Board Meeting

City of Santa Ana
22 Civic Center Plaza
Santa Ana, CA 92701

And via Video and Teleconference (Gov. Code, § 11123.2)

Chair Murray called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

Closed Session: 11:17 a.m. – 11:56 a.m.

Chair Murray adjourned the meeting at 11:56 a.m.

Item 1. Introductions and Declaration of Quorum

***Indicates that attendance was virtual.

Board Members Present at Board Meeting

Kris A. Murray, Chair
John Scandura, Vice Chair
William “Bill” Ruh, Board Member
Letitia Clark, Board Member
Gloria Alvarado, Board Member
Sixto “Al” Lopez, Board Member

Board Members Absent at Board Meeting

None

Staff Present at Board Meeting

Jayne Joy, Executive Officer
Eric Lindberg, Assistant Executive Officer
Jessica Baenre, Clerk to the Board
Nick Amini, Branch Manager, Surface Water and Agriculture Branch
Dan Mefford, Information Technology Specialist I
Claudia Tenorio, Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisor)

State Water Board Present at Board Meeting

Heraclio Pimentel, Regional Board Counsel, Office of Chief Counsel
Jennifer Fordyce, Assistant Chief Counsel, Office of Chief Counsel
David Lancaster, Attorney, Office of Chief Counsel***
Dorene D’Adamo, State Water Board Liaison, State Water Resources Control Board***

Public Attendance Present at Board Meeting

Ellen Jeongja Lee***
Callie Johnson, Pomona College***
Faith Henderson, Pomona College***

Jeff Mosher, Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority
Steve Weisberg, Southern California Coastal Water Research Project

Item 2. Public Forum

None.

Item 3. State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) Liaison Report

State Water Board Member Dorene D'Adamo provided an update on the following:

Strategic Work Plan Update

The Strategic Work Plan allows the State Water Board to review and discuss any changing priorities annually. The updated draft work plan has been posted to the State Water Board website.

Racial Equity Action Plan

In March, the State Water Board received an update on the racial equity action plan.

Stakeholder Meetings

The Division of Administrative Services held stakeholder meetings in March that focused on annual fees and potential adjustments. The next round of stakeholder meetings is scheduled for June 10 and June 11.

Urban Stormwater Infiltration

On March 12, State Water Board staff conducted a public scoping meeting under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the proposed urban stormwater infiltration water quality control policy; public comments were due on March 31.

2026 Integrated Report

In March, the State Water Board received oral comments on the draft 303(d) List for the 2026 California Integrated Report. The list will be considered for adoption in early 2026.

Division of Water Rights Bay Delta Program Unit

The Division of Water Rights Bay Delta Program Unit held additional work meetings between January 16 and March 4 to receive further input on the draft water quality control plan for the San Francisco/Sacramento Delta Watershed.

Utility Wildfire General Order

On March 28, State Water Board staff released proposed revisions to the draft Utility Wildfire General Order; the public comment period will end on April 29.

Administrative Hearings Office

The Administrative Hearings Office is working on two key petitions: the Delta Conveyance Project and the Sites Project Authority. The Hearings Office has completed the evidentiary portion of the hearing for the Sites Project Authority and will now focus on the schedule for closing briefs.

Water Quality Coordinating Committee

The annual Water Quality Coordinating Committee meeting is scheduled for May 1 and May 2.

Board Members asked questions and provided comments.

Item 4. Racial Equity

Jayne Joy, Executive Officer, provided a racial equity update.

Ms. Joy discussed the strategic objectives, public outreach, and engagement with Pomona College. Students from Pomona College contributed to the writing of the Santa Ana River Tribal History, collaborated with staff to plan a Santa Ana River Walk, and organized a Career Path Event Day. During the Career Path Event Day, representatives from the Department of Fish and Wildlife, Public Engagement, Equity and Tribal Affairs, as well as Regional Board staff and Board Member Letitia Clark, spoke to the students about their backgrounds and career paths.

Pomona College students Callie Johnson and Faith Henderson discussed their experiences working with the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Board Members provided comments and asked questions.

Item 5. Regional Board Meeting Minutes of February 14, 2025

Chair Murray asked the Board Members for a motion and asked Board Clerk Ms. Baenre for a roll call vote.

Motion: It was moved by Board Member Ruh, seconded by Board Member Alvarado, and the Regional Board Meeting Minutes of February 14, 2025 were approved as presented by roll call vote.

Roll call vote: Board Member Lopez- Aye, Board Member Alvarado- Aye, Board Member Clark- Aye, Board Member Ruh- Aye, Vice Chair Scandura- Aye, Chair Murray- Aye.

Item 6. Consideration of the Consent Calendar items are listed with an asterisk

Item *7. Waste Discharge Requirements for First March Logistics Project, Riverside County; R8-2025-0021

Chair Murray asked the Board Members for a motion and asked Board Clerk Ms. Baenre for a roll call vote.

Motion: It was moved by Board Member Ruh, seconded by Board Member Clark, and Order Number R8-2025-0021 was approved as presented by roll call vote.

Roll call vote: Board Member Lopez- Aye, Board Member Alvarado- Aye, Board Member Clark- Aye, Board Member Ruh- Aye, Vice Chair Scandura- Aye, Chair Murray- Aye.

Item 8. Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority Overview

This information item was presented by Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA) General Manager Jeff Mosher.

SAWPA is a joint powers authority with five member agencies (Inland Empire Utilities Agency, San Bernardino Valley Water District, Orange County Water District, Western Water, and Eastern Municipal Water District). The purpose of SAWPA is to work on regional issues from a water resources and water quality point of view.

The One Water One Watershed (OWOW) program was established over 15 years ago and has been very successful. The OWOW program is stakeholder-driven and is operated under the Department of Water Resources (DWR) Integrated Regional Water (IRW) Management process, with a focus on collaboration and creating partnerships.

Mr. Mosher highlighted the following regional projects:

2021 Urban and Multi-benefit Drought Relief Grant Program

The DWR awarded SAWPA a \$5 million grant to support water supply needs for small, disadvantaged communities. The funding was allocated to the following projects:

- City of Colton – Production Well 32
- Box Springs Mutual Water Company – Reservoir Improvement
- Marygold Mutual Water Company – Well 7 Rehabilitation and Systems Upgrade
- City of Fullerton – Well 6 Rehabilitation
- Devore Water Company – Booster Pump Station and Valve Vault
- SAWPA – Program Administration

Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) Grant

The TCC Grant was a partnership between SAWPA and the City of Riverside. It focused on urban greening, solar energy, water conservation, and transportation options.

DWR Watershed Resilience Program

The DWR Watershed Resilience Program will receive funding from Proposition 4. This program focuses on watershed-scale management, addressing water from headwaters to outflow. It prioritizes equity and inclusiveness while analyzing climate risks and potential adaptations. The program also emphasizes collaboration across various sectors, including water, flooding, groundwater, water quality, forest and fire management, ecosystem health, and land use. SAWPA has begun working on this concept to ensure readiness when the funding is released.

Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan (CARP)

SAWPA was awarded \$644,190 to help build climate resilience in the Santa Ana Watershed. CARP's benefits include advancing watershed resiliency, defining watershed-wide climate risks and vulnerabilities, developing local and regional climate adaptation

strategies, enhancing multi-jurisdictional collaboration, and supporting future funding of member agency projects, other stakeholder projects, and regional projects.

Cloud Seeding

SAWPA has been awarded an IRW grant under Proposition 1 for a cloud seeding project. Mr. Mosher explained that the cloud seeding project will be a four-year pilot study aimed at increasing snowfall in four high-elevation areas to enhance the local water supply. Year 1 of the project, which ran from November 2023 to April 2024, has been completed. Year 2 has been postponed due to burn scars from wildfires.

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) Watershed Analysis

SAWPA has developed a surface water model to determine where PFAS moves through the watershed. The model can estimate how much PFAS flows in, how much PFAS flows out, and how much PFAS ends up in the groundwater basin. Mr. Mosher explained that the next step is to implement mitigation strategies to reduce the presence of PFAS.

Arundo Donax Management

SAWPA is involved in invasive species management. Mr. Mosher explained that *Arundo donax* is a giant reed that consumes large volumes of water in the tributaries and the Santa Ana River.

Mr. Mosher also briefly discussed potential regional concepts, including invasive species regional collaboration, a regional stream gauge program, aerial imagery (including satellite options), sediment management, nature-based solutions (regional), a watershed dashboard (indicators), and forest management.

Board Members provided comments and asked questions.

Item 9. Southern California Coastal Water Research Project Overview

This item was presented by Steve Weisberg, Executive Director of the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP).

Mr. Weisberg explained that SCCWRP is a joint powers agency founded in 1969. Its mission is to provide an unbiased scientific foundation for ambient water quality management in California. SCCWRP is comprised of several wastewater treatment utilities, stormwater management agencies, and regulatory and management oversight organizations. The governing board of SCCWRP meets quarterly and includes leaders from each member agency.

Mr. Weisberg discussed three topics: regional monitoring, microplastics, and stormwater best management practice evaluations.

Regional Monitoring

The Southern California Bight Regional Monitoring Program is considered the national model. Bight 2023 is the largest, most complex regional monitoring in its 30-year history. It examines eight elements: sediment quality, water quality (ocean acidification and hypoxia), harmful algal blooms, microbiology, trash and microplastics, estuaries, submerged aquatic vegetation, and shellfish bioaccumulation.

Microplastics

Mr. Weisberg explained that in 2018, California enacted two important laws regarding microplastics. The first, SB 1422, requires monitoring of microplastics in drinking water. The second, SB 1263, mandates the development and implementation of a Statewide Ocean Microplastics Management Strategy.

Additionally, Mr. Weisberg highlighted that scientific efforts include developing standardized measurement methods, creating a risk assessment framework to interpret occurrence data, and assessing the abundance of microplastics in the environment. He also mentioned that California is the only place in the world with standard operating procedures and laboratory accreditations specifically for microplastics.

Stormwater Best Management Practice

Mr. Weisberg explained that member agencies invest significant amounts of money in best management practices. For example, Los Angeles County allocates \$300 million each year for this purpose. Mr. Weisberg emphasized that when implementing these best management practices, it is essential to address several key questions: How effective is each of the best management practice technologies? What is the optimal deployment strategy at the watershed level? What constitutes an appropriate maintenance plan?

Board Members provided comments and asked questions.

Item 10. Executive Officer's Report

Jayne Joy, Executive Officer, discussed the following:

Water Quality Coordinating Committee

The Water Quality Coordinating Committee meeting is scheduled for May 1 and May 2.

Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit Renewal

From November 24 through April 25, the Santa Ana Water Board held nine meetings with the counties and interested parties regarding the MS4 permit. The meetings were well attended, with over 70 people at each meeting.

Ms. Joy explained that the MS4 permit revisions and response to comments are complete. The court decision between the City and County of San Francisco v. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) directly relates to the MS4 Permit, which will impact the permit's language and delay its issuance by several months. Ms. Joy stated that the second revised MS4 permit will be available for public comment, and a workshop will be held before the public hearing.

Lake Elsinore and Canyon Lake Total Maximum Daily Load Basin Plan Amendment

During the February 2025 Board meeting, staff discussed the Basin Plan, and the City of Banning raised some significant concerns. Regional Board staff, including Ms. Joy, visited the Banning site. The meeting with Banning was productive, and staff are now working on a proposal that will soon be released for public comment. Ms. Joy anticipates that the Lake Elsinore and Canyon Lake Total Maximum Daily Load Basin Plan Amendment will be presented to the Board for consideration in July.

Municipal Solid Waste Units

Ms. Joy explained that municipal solid waste (MSW) landfills can be used to dispose of debris from the Los Angeles fires. In the Santa Ana region, the El Sobrante Landfill contains MSW units; however, data has shown that this landfill is currently experiencing thermal activity and has not accepted debris from the Los Angeles fires.

Office Reorganization

Ms. Joy spoke about the office reorganization, highlighting that adding and removing staff can create imbalances within the organization and its structure. She announced that MS4 staff will be moving to the Planning Branch. Ms. Joy believes that this change will enhance the region's ability to function effectively, better serve customers and dischargers, and develop improved solutions. Additionally, she noted that three vacancies were lost due to budget reductions.

Chair Murray provided comments.

Item 11. Board Member and Executive Officer Communications

Board Member Lopez

Discussed wastewater being released into the Tijuana River and asked for a brief recap on how this is impacting the whole coastal area.

Board Member Alvarado

Thanked the presenters and staff. Board Member Alvarado mentioned that the racial equity resolution makes the Board proud, and she is pleased with the action plan.

Board Member Clark

Thanked the presenters and expressed gratitude for being a part of the Pomona College panel.

Board Member Ruh

Mentioned the passing of Mary Elieen Mathias from Orange County, who was well known in the water industry for over four decades.

Board Member Ruh also mentioned that the International Monetary Fund named California as the fourth-largest economy in the world.

Vice Chair Scandura

Thanked the presenters and acknowledged the attorneys: Jennifer Fordyce from Sacramento and Heraclio Pimentel, the new Region 8 attorney.

Chair Murray

Thanked the City of Santa Ana and staff for the racial equity work. Chair Murray stated that diversity, equity, and inclusion are priorities and will remain priorities for this region and this Board.

Closed Session

Jennifer Fordyce, Assistant Chief Counsel, announced a closed session.

The Board entered into a closed session at 11:17 a.m., to consider the appointment, employment, evaluation of performance, or dismissal of a public employee or to hear complaints or charges brought against a public employee pursuant to Gov. Code, § 11126, subd. (e)(2)(B)(i).

Adjournment

Chair Murray adjourned the meeting in memory of Mary Elieen Mathias at 11:56 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

JAYNE JOY, P.E.
Executive Officer

/jb