

**A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
SAN GABRIEL BASIN WATER QUALITY AUTHORITY
NOVEMBER 20, 2024, AT 12:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER	The Chairman called the regular meeting of the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority to order and reviewed the actions anticipated on the agenda for the meeting.
REMOTE PARTICIPATION DECLARATION – AB 2449	None.
ROLL CALL OF BOARD MEMBERS	Mark Paulson, Lynda Noriega, Bob Kuhn, Robert Gonzales, Robert DiPrimio, Valerie Munoz, and Ed Chavez.
BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT	None.
STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT	Randy, Schoellerman, Executive Director; Stephanie Moreno, Director of Communications; Dan Colby, Assistant Executive Director/Senior Project Manager; Mary Saenz, Director of Finance; Jackie Montgomery, Accounting Specialist; Michelle Sanchez, Senior Administrative Assistant
MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT	Russ Bryden, Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster; Gabriel Monares, The Monares Group
MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC THAT PARTICIPATED VIA ONLINE/TELECONFERENCE	Steve Kiggins, San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District; Jennifer Santana, Valley County Water District
PUBLIC COMMENT	None.
ITEMS TOO LATE TO BE AGENDIZED	None.
CONSENT CALENDAR	<p>Ms. Moreno reported that there was a typo on the November 20, 2024, project demands and that the revised listing was passed out for Board review.</p> <p>Ms. Munoz moved to approve the consent with the presented correction. Mr. Gonzales seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously with the following abstentions:</p> <p>Ms. Noriega abstained from Project Demand No. E92424. Mr. DiPrimio abstained from Project Demand No. E92400, E92417, E92425 and E92431.</p>

COMMITTEE REPORTS

*Legislative/Public Information
Committee Report* None.

*Administrative/Finance Committee
Report* None.

OTHER ACTION/INFORMATION ITEMS

*Discussion/Action Regarding Site
Access Agreement with Logos
Evangelical Seminary*

Mr. Colby reported on the progress of the Prop 1 implementation grant, which was awarded for the expansion of the Whitmore Street Groundwater Remediation Facility (WSGRF). It was noted that the Prop 1 project required the need for four access agreements, of these, three agreements have already been completed and finalized. Mr. Colby reported that Logos Evangelical Seminary is the fourth and final access agreement needed. He explained that this agreement pertains specifically to pipeline access only with no other infrastructure will be installed on this property. He stated that during negotiations, the property owner requested the removal of a dead tree located on the property, and WQA agreed to this request. He reported that the terms of this final agreement were reviewed, confirmed and will last for a duration of 20 years with a one-time payment in the amount of \$5,000. This final agreement will complete the access requirements for the project under the Prop 1 grant.

Ms. Munoz moved to approve the Site Access Agreement with Logos Evangelical Seminary. Mr. DiPrimio seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

*Discussion/Action Regarding
Federal Funding Program
Administration (FFPA) Guidelines*

Mr. Colby reported on the upcoming Round XI of WQA's Federal Funding Program Administration (FFPA) process. It was noted that the board had previously approved amendments to the guidelines for Round X during a meeting in June 2022, as reflected in the staff report. However, it was clarified that during the discussion the correct date of the approved amendments was June 2020. Mr. Colby reported that for Round XI, \$5.5 million will be distributed to projects. Mr. Colby proposed opening the solicitation period on November 25, 2024, and closing it on January 30, 2025, providing applicants with approximately two months to submit their applications. While acknowledging that the application period overlaps with the holiday season, Mr. Colby emphasized the importance of allowing sufficient time for applicants to prepare and submit their proposals without feeling rushed. He reported that several minor changes to the guidelines for Round XI were highlighted. One of the key updates was the addition of criteria regarding the readiness of applicants to proceed with their projects. Applicants who have completed

their CEQA requirements and have acknowledged compliance with Watermaster Section 28 may receive the maximum corresponding ranking, as this indicates that the project is shovel ready. He reported that another modification involved removing references to "best available technologies" from the guidelines, as this requirement is already addressed through approvals by other regulatory agencies. He also mentioned that there is a slight possibility of additional federal funding of approximately \$7 million becoming available for the FFPA process. However, for now, WQA is focused on distributing the current allocated \$5.5 million.

Mr. Schoellerman noted that there was a discrepancy in the draft agenda packet regarding the solicitation closing date. While the packet initially listed February 1, 2025, the correct closing date was confirmed as January 30, 2025.

Mr. Chavez expressed concern about WQA's ability to receive funding under the new administration if the appropriations process is altered.

Ms. Noriega moved to approve the amended FFPA Guidelines and open the Round XI solicitation. Mr. Gonzales seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

PROJECT REPORTS

Mr. Colby reported on the Prop 1 site investigation, which involved investigating 12 high-priority sites within and around the South El Monte Operable Unit (SEMOU). He reported that all site investigations and groundwater monitoring reports had been completed and submitted to the LA Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). These investigations included an initial site assessment followed by secondary groundwater confirmation sampling event six months later. The only remaining task under the grant is the submission of the final project report to the State Water Resources Control Board Division of Financial Assistance, which will mark the conclusion of the grant. He reported that discussions with the RWQCB are ongoing as they review the site investigations to determine if further exploration is needed at any of the sites. While this decision rests solely with the RWQCB, he noted that WQA's consultants for the project found no evidence of a site still contributing to groundwater contamination in the SEMOU. He stated that this does not eliminate the possibility of groundwater contamination from other sites.

Mr. Colby reported that on October 22nd, a SEMOU technical meeting took place where the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) confirmed that DTSC has assumed operational control of the

SEMOU. He stated that although the EPA remains involved, its primary responsibilities include evaluating and improving the monitoring well network to ensure effective containment of the groundwater plume. Additionally, he reported that EPA is now considering a final Record of Decision for the SEMOU, a shift from its previous stance.

Mr. Colby reported that on October 29th, a Puente Valley Operable Unit (PVOU) technical meeting took place. He reported that Northrop Grumman (Northrop) has completed construction of the Intermediate Zone (IZ) Remedy project and is awaiting a permit from the Division of Drinking Water (DDW), with a public hearing tentatively scheduled for early 2025. He reported that the Shallow Zone South (SZS) Remedy, also Northrop's responsibility, is operational and currently discharges to Puente Creek under a water production agreement. He reported that on December 2, 2024, La Puente Valley County Water District will take operational control of the SZS and IZ remedies. He stated that Northrop has shown increased engagement, expressing interest in a dedication ceremony planned for spring 2025, which staff will assist in the coordination.

Mr. Colby reported that on November 4th, DTSC met with water purveyors to discuss reimbursement mechanisms. He stated that while it was encouraging that Cheryl Prowell, a senior DTSC official, participated, concerns remain among purveyors about whether all costs will be reimbursed. He reported that DTSC maintains that only VOC treatment at approved pumping rates should be reimbursed, based on outdated 2016 modeling.

Mr. Colby reported that on November 12th, an El Monte Operable Unit (EMOU) technical meeting took place. He reported that during FFPA Round X, the board allocated \$1 million to the Westside Performing Settling Defendants for shallow zone enhancements, including the installation of seven new extraction wells and pipelines. He stated that the work has been completed, and functional testing is underway to ensure proper operation and integration with the treatment facility. He reported that the EPA remains concerned about containment issues in the northwest deep and east side of the EMOU, requiring additional work by the responsible parties to achieve effective containment.

Lastly, Mr. Colby gave an update on the November 7th Public Utilities Commission (PUC) hearing, where he gave testimony

on behalf of Suburban Water Systems to support their rate case. He stated that the rate case includes funding for the Plant 201 PFAS treatment facility, to which WQA has committed \$1 million. He indicated that concerns were raised about the potential impact if the rate case is not approved. He stated that Suburban Water Systems has requested that WQA submit a letter of support to the PUC before their next hearing on December 8th. Staff are preparing the letter for submission.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Mr. Padilla reported that there was no attorney report and that there will not be a closed session.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Mr. Monares updated the board that at the state level, Proposition 4, addressing water, wildfire, and climate risk issues, had passed. He acknowledged the importance of ensuring alignment and advocacy on this proposition as it progresses. Mr. Monares noted the changes in the State Senate. He mentioned Sasha Renee Perez, John Heredity, Mark Gonzalez, and Michelle Rodriguez as new members. He noted Michelle Rodriguez as taking over a key position. He indicated that efforts are already underway to invite these new members to participate in future discussions and a project tour.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Schoellerman highlighted that the approvals made by the board earlier in the meeting was for payments related to Proposition 68 funding. He stated that a total of \$4.9 million in funds was distributed to various parties, including the City of Alhambra, City of Arcadia, Golden State Water Company, City of Monrovia, City of Monterey Park, San Gabriel Valley Water Company, City of South Pasadena and Valley County Water District. He indicated that as the process with the state becomes smoother, future payments should occur more consistently.

Mr. Schoellerman reported on a recent issue involving the WSGRF project that received a notice of violation due to a Mercury detection above the permissible discharge limit. He explained that the violation was likely lab error, as WQA had no history of elevated discharges of Mercury in the nearly 20 years of discharges. He noted that the regulatory process required action, and a \$3,000 stipulated penalty was offered as part of the resolution, which WQA chose to accept rather than contest the result through an appeal. He emphasized that while such occurrences are rare, they illustrate the importance of vigilance and accurate lab work.

Mr. Schoellerman reported that the auditors conducted their interim fieldwork earlier in the month, with final fieldwork scheduled for the first week of December. He reported that this is the first audit cycle for the new auditing firm and expressed confidence in their progress despite some initial challenges related to understanding the WQA's unique

operational structure.

Mr. Schoellerman reported that some staff members attended the Orange County Water District tour of treatment facilities and that they proved informative, showcasing not only well operations but also a longstanding recycled water project in Orange County.

Mr. Schoellerman reminded the board about the upcoming ACWA conference in Palm Desert from December 3rd to 5th. He also reminded them of the annual SCWUA Christmas luncheon scheduled for December 12th.

He reported that WQA received reappointments of board members from the San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District and the San Gabriel Valley Water Association.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

FUTURE BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The next Legislative/Public Information Committee meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

The next Administrative/Finance Committee meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at 10 a.m.

The next WQA Board meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, December 18, 2024, at 12:00 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION

A closed session was not held.

BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS/ REPORTS

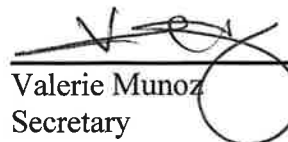
Board Members wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. Ms. Noriega commented on the need to amend the San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation and was concerned as to what impact it would have on WQA with Grace Napolitano leaving office.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chairman asked if there were any other items of business to come before the Board, there being none, the meeting was adjourned until the next meeting on December 18, 2024.



Mark Paulson
Chairman



Valerie Munoz
Secretary