

**SAN GABRIEL BASIN WATER QUALITY AUTHORITY
LEGISLATIVE/PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE
MARCH 11, 2025 AT 9:00 A.M.**

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kuhn called the committee meeting to order and reviewed the actions anticipated on the agenda for the meeting.

**REMOTE PARTICIPATION
DECLARATION – AB 2449
[Government Code Section 54953(f)]**

Ms. Munoz reported that she provided notice of her need to attend this meeting remotely for just cause. She indicated that no one else was in the room with her during the meeting.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS
PRESENT**

Bob Kuhn, Robert Gonzales and Valerie Munoz (remote).

WATERMASTER LIASON

None.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS
ABSENT**

None.

**OTHER BOARD MEMBERS
PRESENT**

None.

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Randy Schoellerman, Executive Director; Dan Colby, Assistant Executive Director/Senior Project Manager; Stephanie Moreno, Director of Communications; Mary Saenz, Director of Finance; Jackie Montgomery, Accounting Specialist; Michelle Sanchez, Senior Administrative Assistant/Office Coordinator

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC
PRESENT**

Bruce Knoles, San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC
PARTICIPATING ONLINE**

Chris Lancaster, Civic Publications

Public Comment

None.

***Discussion Regarding Next
Advertorial***

Ms. Moreno reported that the upcoming advertorial will be in the Civic Leadership publication and will focus on the transition of operational control from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to the Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) for the South El Monte Operable Unit (SEMOU) Interim Remedy (IR). She explained that the advertorial aims to inform the public about the process, responsibilities, and the importance of DTSC fulfilling its mandated obligations.

Mr. Lancaster reported that the Civic Leadership would be published the week of March 24th in the L.A. Times e-edition to 370,000 people and also distributed via email. He informed the committee that videos of Chairwoman Noriega and Mr. Schoellerman highlighting the work of WQA would be imbedded in the e-edition.

Mr. Schoellerman updated the committee on the ongoing negotiations with DTSC regarding its responsibilities and funding obligations related to the SEMOU. He stated that despite the initial resistance and funding issues, progress has been made towards a cooperative agreement.

Ms. Moreno stated that the following advertorial will be in April for the Earth Day publication. Mr. Lancaster informed the committee that Cal Trans, Metro and Port of Long Beach will be featured in the publication as well.

Discussion Regarding Support for AB259

Ms. Moreno reported as part of his response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Newsom issued a series of Executive Orders to expand public access to meetings of local agencies by suspending some of the restrictions related to the Ralph M. Brown Act (Brown Act) on teleconferencing. The effect was the expanded use of teleconferencing for meetings of a legislative body, resulting in enhanced meeting access and increased participation by the public. She stated that in 2022, the Three Valleys Municipal Water District (TVMWD) sponsored AB 2449, that amended the Brown Act, which eliminated the previously existing teleconference provisions and revised notice requirements to allow for greater public participation in teleconference meetings. Beginning in 2023, special districts and other local agencies began using the procedures established by AB 2449, successfully facilitating remote participation for officials that would otherwise been encumbered by illness, official travel, or medical emergency. She stated that currently AB 2449 has a sunset date of January 1, 2026. To preserve the flexibility provided by AB 2449, AB 259 would eliminate this sunset date, thereby preserving indefinitely the remote meeting procedures added by the earlier legislation. She noted that AB 259 would not change any other elements of the remote meeting provisions. She informed the committee that TVMWD's is asking for support on this bill and noted the included draft letter of support and accompanying draft resolution in the agenda packet. After some discussion, the committee agreed to move the item to the full board for approval.

State

Mr. Schoellerman reported on the state legislative activities as numerous bills are progressing through committees. He stated that the governor's budget remains a central topic, with ongoing deliberations in budget committees. He stated that the state is facing fiscal challenges, which the governor attributes to federal policies under the Trump administration. He stated that a significant bill being discussed was one related to the establishment of a per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) fund. He informed that while the bill does not allocate any funding, it does mandate the creation of such a fund, allowing contributions from any source.

Mr. Schoellerman shared that he attended the California Groundwater Coalition's (CGC) Lobby Day in Sacramento on March 4th and received insights into the PFAS legislation. He stated that other legislative matters were mentioned, including those concerning water reservoir operations and that there is a push for improved forecasting to prevent premature water releases due to inaccurate storm predictions, ensuring water conservation for future needs.

Federal

Mr. Schoellerman reported that he is closely monitoring Congress, particularly in regard to budget negotiations. He expressed that there is an uncertainty over whether the \$7 million in WQA's federal funding will be preserved. He stated that the House is expected to pass a new Continuing Resolution (CR) bill funding the government through September 2025, replacing the current CR that expires on Friday, March 14th. He noted the potential for a government shutdown, with agencies like the EPA already canceling meetings in anticipation of the shutdown. He stated that if a full-year CR is passed, it could impact the funding prospects for funds to the WQA.

Mr. Schoellerman reported on the upcoming trip to Washington, D.C., scheduled for March 31st. He informed the committee that the trip will involve meetings with key legislators and committee members to advocate for funding, including the \$10 million typically requested. He emphasized the importance of these meetings in ensuring continued support for WQA initiatives.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S
REPORT**

Mr. Schoellerman reminded the committee that he attended the California Groundwater Coalition (CGC) Lobby Day in Sacramento, which was productive. He informed the committee that they conducted 14 visits with various legislators to discuss bills regarding groundwater legislation. He stated the event provided an opportunity for groundwater agency representatives from across the state to engage with

legislators and advocate for groundwater-related initiatives. Mr. Schoellerman mentioned recent positive developments with the DTSC negotiations progressing in a positive direction. He stated that while the situation remains fluid, there is optimism that matters will move forward without requiring elevated action.


Mr. Schoellerman reported on the upcoming trip to Washington, D.C., scheduled for March 31st. He informed the committee that Chairwoman Lynda Noriega and Vice Chairman Robert Gonzales will be accompanying him.

Ms. Moreno updated the committee on upcoming events; (1) San Gabriel Valley Public Affairs Network Luncheon Leadership Series with Congressman Gil Cisneros on March 17th; (2) San Gabriel Valley Legislation Caucus on March 20th; City of West Covina Earth Day on April 27th; and Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District's Waterfest on May 3rd.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kuhn asked if there were any other items of business to come before the committee. There being none, the meeting was adjourned.


Lynda Noriega
Chairwoman


Valerie Munoz
Secretary