

**A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
SAN GABRIEL BASIN WATER QUALITY AUTHORITY
FEBRUARY 18, 2026, AT 12:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER	The Chairwoman 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	Lynda Noriega, Valerie Munoz, Bob Kuhn, Mark Paulson, Robert DiPrimio, Ed Chavez and Robert Gonzales (late).
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; Maritza Cardenas, Director of Finance; Jackie Montgomery, Accounting Specialist; Pearl Escobar, Project Resource Specialist; Michelle Sanchez, Senior Administrative Assistant
MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT	Gabriel Monares, The Monares Group; Lenet Pacheco, Valley County Water Company; Jose Martinez, Valley County Water Company
MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC THAT PARTICIPATED VIA ONLINE/TELECONFERENCE	Chris Lancaster, Civic Publications
PUBLIC COMMENT	None.
ITEMS TOO LATE TO BE AGENDIZED	None.
CONSENT CALENDAR	<p>Ms. Moreno reported a revision in the Administration Demands, noting due to printer error the check numbers were changed. She noted that none of the check amounts or totals of the Administration Demands changed.</p> <p>Mr. Kuhn moved to approve the consent calendar as presented with the revisions. Ms. Munoz seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously with the following abstentions:</p> <p>Ms. Noriega abstained from Project Demand No. E92891 and Mr. DiPrimio abstained from Project Demand Nos. E92886</p>

and E92892.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Legislative/Public Information Committee Report

Mr. Schoellerman reported that the minutes for the committee meeting were enclosed for review.

He gave a brief update on the discussions had at the committee regarding the recent trip to Washington, D.C., attended by Chair Noriega, Vice-Chair Gonzalez, Gabriel Monares, WQA Federal lobbyist Chris Keurig and himself. He noted that a total of nine meetings were conducted with congressional offices despite the cold weather, protests, and a partial federal government shutdown. He stated that discussions focused primarily on the proposed amendment related to language changes in the Restoration Fund, as well as the agency's upcoming \$10 million funding request for FY27. Meetings were held with House of Representatives staff, Senate staff, and members of the House and Senate Appropriations and Resources Committees. He reported that the trip was productive, with positive feedback received and stated that additional comments will be provided later in the meeting.

OTHER ACTION/INFORMATION ITEMS

Draft San Gabriel Basin Groundwater "406 Plan" for 2026

Mr. Colby reported that Section §406 of WQA's enabling act requires the WQA to develop and adopt a basin wide groundwater quality management and remediation plan. The plan includes a characterization of the contamination, a comprehensive cleanup plan, a summary of financing available, a description of public outreach efforts and a discussion about the roles of other agencies that WQA interacts with to facilitate basin cleanup efforts. He noted that each year staff updates the §406 Plan and releases it for public comment prior to the Board adopting it.

Presentation on Comments

Mr. Colby reported that on January 21, 2026, the Board authorized staff to release the Draft §406 Plan for 2026 for a 28-day public comment period ending February 18, 2026. He noted that staff posted notices of the public comment period in both La Opinion and the San Gabriel Valley Tribune on January 29, 2026, as well as the WQA's website. He stated that no comments have been received at this time. Therefore, staff was recommending adoption of the §406 Plan for 2026.

Adopt Plan for 2026

Ms. Munoz moved to adopt the San Gabriel Basin Groundwater Quality Management and Remediation Plan §406 Plan for 2026. Mr. Paulson seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Discussion/Action Regarding the San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership Annual Membership Renewal

Mr. Schoellerman reported that the WQA has a Leader Level Membership with San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership which requires an annual renewal amount of \$20,000, consistent with the previous year's membership level. He stated that Mr. Kuhn is the WQA representative and Ms. Moreno is the alternate.

Mr. Kuhn stated that WQA's membership has been beneficial in putting WQA's issues out in front of the community by allowing the WQA to participate in local events with local city officials and state legislators. He noted that he is co-chair on the Legislative Committee.

***Approve Renewal for 2026
Approve Demand No. E92893***

Mr. Kuhn moved to approve the annual renewal for 2026 and to approve Demand No. E92893. Ms. Munoz seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Adopt Resolution No. 26-002, A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority Expressing Appreciation and Commending Mary Saenz Upon Her Retirement

Mr. Schoellerman reported that Resolution No. 26-002, was being brought for approval honoring Ms. Saenz for her retirement following 20 years of service with the Water Quality Authority. He expressed gratitude for Ms. Saenz and recognized her for her dedicated service, integrity, and strong commitment to maintain the public's trust in her role as Director of Finance. He commended her efforts to ensure proper financial management and uphold the standards expected of a public agency. He expressed appreciation for her professionalism and the positive impact she made on the organization throughout her tenure. He then read the resolution.

All Board Members moved to approve Resolution No. 26-002, Expressing Appreciation and Commending Mary Saenz upon her retirement. All Board Members seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by the following roll call vote:

AYES: NORIEGA, PAULSON, MUNOZ, KUHN,
DIPRIMIO, CHAVEZ

NO: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE

ABSENT: GONZALES

Ms. Noriega opened the item for comments from Ms. Saenz and the Board Members.

Ms. Saenz was invited to provide remarks first. She shared that when she initially accepted her position with the WQA, she viewed it as a "retirement job" following her time in public accounting. She noted that the four-day work week and the opportunity to work with a dedicated and ethical team made it a dream position. She expressed her appreciation for WQA's

mission, commended the integrity of the staff and Board, and stated she was proud to have served as Director of Finance.

Mr. Chavez expressed appreciation for Ms. Saenz's service to the WQA, describing her as a wonderful employee and valued member of the organization. He noted that he had consulted with her on several financial matters over the years and commended her expertise and knowledge. He stated that she will be greatly missed and acknowledged her significant role within the WQA.

Mr. Kuhn acknowledged that while change is inevitable, Ms. Saenz approached her role at the WQA as more than just a job, but rather as a second career. He expressed appreciation for her consistent responsiveness and dedication, noting that she was always available to address questions regardless of the time. He thanked her for her significant contributions to the WQA, recognized the substantial impact of her financial expertise, and stated that she leaves behind big shoes to fill. He wished her the very best in retirement and future endeavors.

Ms. Munoz thanked Ms. Saenz for her dedicated service to the WQA and expressed appreciation for the knowledge and expertise she brought to the agency. She noted that, as a non-water professional, she especially valued Ms. Saenz's guidance and support. She congratulated her on her retirement and wished her a fulfilling and enjoyable next chapter focused on personal interests and well-earned time off.

Mr. Paulson congratulated Ms. Saenz and thanked her for her dedication and leadership. He acknowledged her guidance and financial expertise over the years and commended her ability to handle challenging matters with professionalism. He wished her well in retirement and encouraged her to enjoy the next phase of life.

Mr. DiPrimio congratulated Ms. Saenz on her retirement and noted that he was familiar with her professionally prior to him joining the Board of the WQA. He highlighted the significant work she performed in support of water producers, acknowledging the positive impact of her assistance to agencies. He expressed appreciation for her service, stated that his staff was indebted to her for her contributions, and wished her continued success and fulfillment in retirement.

Ms. Noriega reiterated the appreciation expressed by fellow Board members and congratulated Ms. Saenz on her retirement from the WQA. She noted prior professional experience working with her while at Valley County Water District, highlighting her role in facilitating a seamless reimbursement process for producers and partner agencies. She commended Ms. Saenz for her 20 years of dedicated service, the lasting

impact of her contributions to the WQA and the producers it serves, and her commitment to excellence. Ms. Noriega expressed gratitude for her service and looked forward to celebrating her at the upcoming retirement reception.

Mr. Schoellerman echoed the Board's appreciation for Ms. Saenz's many contributions to the WQA. He commended her for providing the Board with sound financial counsel and recognized her extensive skill and knowledge in fiscal matters. He recalled the recruitment process for a Director of Finance 20 years ago, noting that staff immediately recognized Ms. Saenz as the right candidate when she interviewed. Mr. Schoellerman expressed gratitude for her long-standing service and wished her the very best in retirement, adding that he looked forward to continuing the celebration at her reception.

Mr. Colby thanked Ms. Saenz for her dedicated service to the WQA and highlighted her strong advocacy on behalf of water purveyors regarding the eligibility of expenses during the reimbursement process with various regulators. He noted that she worked diligently to ensure appropriate and eligible costs were reimbursed and consistently represented producers' interests. Mr. Colby commended her willingness to engage with regulatory agencies, including the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and regional water boards, to secure proper reimbursement. He expressed appreciation for her tireless efforts and thanked her for her commitment and perseverance.

Ms. Moreno acknowledged Ms. Saenz's 20 years of service with the WQA, describing her as "a tough cookie" and commending her strong work ethic. She noted that, despite not being a finance professional herself, she learned a great deal from her handling of financial matters. Ms. Moreno expressed appreciation for having the opportunity to work with her and reserved additional comments for the retirement celebration the following day.

Mr. Gonzales entered the meeting.

PROJECT REPORTS

Mr. Colby gave an update on the construction of the new monitoring wells associated with WQA's Whitmore Street Ground Water Remediation Facility Expansion Grant, showing photos of the progress and providing explanations of what he was showing. He indicated that monitoring wells should be completed by the first week of March. Subsequently, construction of the extraction wells is expected to begin.

Mr. Paulson asked how deep the wells were.

Mr. Colby answered stating that the wells vary between 150 to 170-feet.

Mr. Kuhn asked if there was a fee the WQA was paying for access to the site.

Mr. Colby replied that WQA negotiated a one-time fee with the effected property owners for the required 20-year access requirement.

He reported that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is conducting their 5-year Reviews of the operable units. He stated that for Area 1, which includes El Monte Operable Unit, South El Monte Operable Unit (SEMOU) and Whittier Narrows Operable Unit, project tours were completed on January 28th. He reported that the review for Area 4, which includes Puente Valley Operable Unit (PVOU), project tours were completed on January 29th. He stated that staff submitted comments in the questionnaires for SEMOU and PVOU. He noted that the specific issues within the SEMOU was condition of the monitoring wells and the increasing trend of VOC contamination in the north west area. He noted that the specific issues within the PVOU is the delay of progress by Carrier Corporation associated with the Shallow Zone North Remedy project.

Mr. DiPrimio expressed his appreciation to staff for their efforts involved with EPA and the 5-year review process, noting that it provides valuable information for the Board. He commented that despite over 20 years of water treatment and containment, some operable units still exceed multiple times the maximum contaminant level, indicating ongoing challenges. He emphasized that contrary to some cooperating respondents' perceptions, the treatment systems are not nearing the end of their usefulness, and work toward achieving final cleanup will continue for the foreseeable future.

Mr. Paulson asked what the WQA can do to force the hand of Carrier Corporation to step up.

Mr. Colby answered stating that WQA's advertorials do help, however, the decision of enforcement is up to EPA.

Mr. Schoellerman added that the current EPA project manager, Ray Chavira, is very aware of the issues and is committed to the projects.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

None.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Mr. Monares reported that the recent trip to Washington, D.C. was successful. He noted the meetings were held with local congressional members and several committee representatives. He stated that positive comments were received regarding WQA's Restoration Fund appropriation requests. He noted that a highlight of the trip was a comment from a Republican

consultant on one of the committees, who stated that our legislation would not generate a “score,” meaning it would not assign a cost value to the Treasury. In congressional terms, this improves the legislation’s chances of being approved.

Ms. Noriega recognized Mr. Gonzales arriving to the meeting after the adoption of Resolution 26-002, asking if he would like to provide comments.

Mr. Gonzales congratulated Ms. Saenz on her retirement. He expressed that, although he has not been on the Board for long, he has had the pleasure of working with her and wished her well in her future endeavors.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Mr. Schoellerman reported that the trip to DC was successful, concurring with Mr. Monares' report. He noted that WQA will request a \$10 million Restoration Fund allocation for the FY27 budget cycle and will also seek to amend authorization language to potentially increase the funding authorization for the Restoration Fund going forward. He reported that WQA was successful at getting \$3.2 million for the Restoration Fund in this current budget cycle which he expected to be received in the fall.

He stated that the WQA Annual Report was completed and available.

He gave an update on the BPOU negotiations, stating they would be meeting the following week. He stated that the scopes of work are being updated and proposed language reviewed. He stated he was encouraged by the progress, noting that the deadline was in October.

He reported that, effective March 1st, Ms. Cardenas will officially assume the role of Director of Finance. He noted that Ms. Saenz will be gradually transitioning out of her role over the next few months, assisting Ms. Cardenas with the budget implementation and completion of the audit. He expressed his enthusiasm for Maritza joining in this capacity and acknowledged her talent and anticipated contributions to the WQA.

Mr. Schoellerman gave an update on the issue with the Golden Mussel. He acknowledged the efforts of the Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster, particularly in coordination with Ms. Noriega, in addressing the matter. He noted that Upper San Gabriel Valley Water District, San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District, and Three Valleys Municipal Water District are working with the County of Los Angeles to facilitate water imports while managing concerns related to the Golden Mussel. He stated that county restrictions and delays were acknowledged, and encouraged support efforts to ensure the water is imported as needed. He further noted that recent

rainfall has helped water supply, though ongoing pressure on the county is necessary to expedite a resolution.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Ms. Moreno reported on the upcoming events as follows:

- February 19th – Mary's Retirement Reception
- May 5th-7th - ACWA Spring Conference, Registration now open

Ms. Moreno reminded the Board that their Conflict-of-Interest Form 700 filings were due to the FPPC on April 2nd.

FUTURE BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The next Legislative/Public Information Committee meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, March 11, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

The next Administrative/Finance Committee meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, March 11, 2026, at 10 a.m.

The next WQA Board meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, March 18, 2025, at 12:00 p.m.

The dates of the meetings for the month of April were discussed and were changed to April 15th for the committee meetings and April 22nd for the Board meeting. This change was for April meetings only.

CLOSED SESSION

None.

RECONVENE OPEN SESSION

None.

BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS/ REPORTS

Mr. Kuhn commended the annual report, noting that it was well-prepared and easily understandable by the general reader. He acknowledged that, despite not being well with numbers, he found the report interesting and easy to understand. He also asked if there was anything the board needed to be aware of with the changes in the Brown Act due to AB 707.

Mr. Padilla, General Counsel, replied that AB 707 expanded the reasons for 'just cause' and would provide more information later on.

Mr. Gonzales thanked Ms. Munoz for accompanying him to Congressman Cisneros' joint roundtable meeting. He noted that water issues received significant attention, and the Congressman recognized the importance of water management, including input from multiple cities. He stated that they were encouraged to continue engaging with the Congressman, and expressed that the WQA remains on his radar.


Ms. Noriega reiterated that the Washington, D.C. trip was productive and stated that she came away with the same feeling of Mr. Monares in his report regarding the comment from a Republican consultant on one of the committees, who stated that our legislation would not generate a “score,” meaning it had better chances of being successful. She thanked Mr. Schoellerman and the team for their logistical support ensuring efficient transportation. She noted that the insights gained are expected to assist in advancing and addressing the 10-year operations and maintenance revision.

Ms. Moreno reported that she would be attending the San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership Advocacy Day in Sacramento and would distribute hard copies of the annual report to staff and legislators that she will be meeting. She also reported that the electronic version of the report had received 82,000 page views.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chairwoman 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 March 18, 2026.


Lynda Noriega
Chairwoman


Valerie Munoz
Secretary