

Board Member Roll Call and Introductions

Nancy Wright, Jayne Powell, Ed Muzik, and Peter Satin were present. The Board Clerk stated that a quorum was present.

The virtual meeting via Zoom was called to order by Board Chair Nancy Wright at 9:00 a.m. on December 10, 2020.

State and Regional Water Board Staff Present

Paula Rasmussen, Cassandra Owens, Katharine Buddingh, Laurel Firestone, Mary Castaneda, CJ Jasieniecki, Dan Mefford, Hilda Vasquez, Adriana Godinez, Maria Davydova, Jennie Snyder, Nadim Shukry-Zeywar, Kai Dunn, Mandy Roman, Viviana Marquez, Marc Gutierrez, and Maria Ramirez.

Virtual Public Attendance

Brea Mohammed, Imperial County Farm Bureau
Steve Charlton, Imperial Irrigation District

Public Forum

There were no public speakers during the Public Forum.

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of November 12, 2020 Board Meeting.

Motion: Ed Muzik moved, Jayne Powell seconded, and a roll call vote was taken.

Roll Call Vote: Nancy Wright – Aye, Jayne Powell – Aye, Ed Muzik – Aye, Peter Satin – Aye.

The motion was carried unanimously to adopt the minutes of the November 12, 2020 Board meeting.

2. State Water Board Liaison Update [Laurel Firestone, State Water Board Liaison]

Laurel Firestone provided an informational update on various State Water Board activities. She reported that the annual strategic workplan priorities are under development for water quality, drinking water, and water rights. For water quality, these include adoption of the statewide general permit for wineries, guidance on stormwater cost compliance, as well as development of biostimulatory substance and biological integrity statewide objectives.

She stated that the Salton Sea remains a high priority, including exploring ways to support the Colorado River Basin Region in the adoption of TMDLs. She also stated that the State Water Board recently adopted a formal, statewide water quality control plan for inland surface waters, enclosed bays, and estuaries. The newly-adopted policy includes statewide water quality objectives for both acute and chronic aquatic toxicity, as well as a framework for monitoring toxicity. Ms. Firestone mentioned that a public workshop was held soliciting comments on the draft construction stormwater general permit, which will hopefully be finalized and adopted next year. She also mentioned a needs assessment workshop on December 14th to develop the fund expenditure plan, which must be adopted before July 1, 2021. Lastly, she added that COVID-19 restrictions continue to affect the Water Boards, with staff continuing to telework and many state buildings closed until June 2021.

Contested and Discussion Items

3. R7-2020-0030 – Consideration of adoption of Resolution Adopting the 2020 Triennial Review of the Water Quality Control Plan for the Colorado River Basin Region [*Maria Davydova, ES*]

Maria Davydova, Environmental Scientist, provided an overview of the proposed 2020 Triennial Review of the Water Quality Control Plan for the Colorado River Basin Region. The presentation included an overview of the Triennial Review process and the methodology for ranking the projects on the 2020 Triennial Review List.

Ms. Davydova addressed questions and comments from the Board and the public. The Board commended Ms. Davydova on her efforts on putting together the Resolution and the presentation provided.

Speaker: Brea Mohammed, Imperial County Farm Bureau

Motion: Ed Muzik moved, Jayne Powell seconded, and a roll call vote was taken.

Roll Call Vote: Nancy Wright – Aye, Jayne Powell – Aye, Ed Muzik – Aye, Peter Satin – Aye.

The motion was carried unanimously to adopt Resolution R7-2020-0030 as presented.

4. R7-2020-0035 – Consideration of adoption of Short-Term Renewal of Order R7-2015-0008 Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Agricultural Wastewater Dischargers and Dischargers of Wastes from Drain Operation and Maintenance Activities within the Imperial Valley, Imperial County [*Jennie Snyder, WRCE*]

There were no questions or comments on this item, therefore the item was considered for adoption without discussion.

Motion: Ed Muzik moved, Jayne Powell seconded, and a roll call vote was taken.

Roll Call Vote: Nancy Wright – Aye, Jayne Powell – Aye, Ed Muzik – Aye, Peter Satin – Aye.

The motion was carried unanimously to adopt Order R7-2020-0035 as presented.

**A short break was taken to allow the interpreters to switch.*

Informational Items

5. Dredge and Fill Program Activities Update [*Kai Dunn, Senior WRCE*]

Kai Dunn, Senior Water Resources Control Engineer, presented an overview of the Water Quality Certification Program for dredge or fill activities. He explained how recent changes to the federal regulatory definition of waters of the United States impact staff's implementation of the Water Quality Certification Program in the desert region. He noted that many dredge or fill projects involving ephemeral dry washes must now be issued Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) by the Board instead of Water Quality Certifications under section 401 of the Clean Water Act.

6. Colorado River Basin Water Board Executive Officer's Report [*Paula Rasmussen, EO*]

Ms. Rasmussen reported that all state offices are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with updated guidance from CalEPA based on the Governor's new stay-at-home order, the Regional Water Board office is closed to the public and will remain closed for at least three weeks. Staff continues to telework, with only a few staff onsite to handle critical tasks such as mail, deliveries, and other such things. She stated that staff must practice social distancing and wear masks in the office unless they are in an enclosed room. She also mentioned that one staff member is now deployed full-time to a local health agency for contact tracing efforts. She stated that she will be participating in a California-Mexico Border Relations Council meeting hosted by CalEPA to discuss cross-border environmental issues. She also mentioned that the Regional Water Board recently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with IP Oberon, LLC and Aspen Environmental Group to provide for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. She explained that the MOU provides a framework and a funding mechanism for preparing the EIR, and the Regional Water Board will be the lead agency for the project. Lastly, she noted that the next Regional Water Board meeting will include a workshop on Board priorities and the accomplishments of the last year.

7. Colorado River Basin Water Board Member Comments

Board Member Satin thanked Regional Water Board staff for providing excellent presentations, and also thanked the interpreters for their translation of the meeting.

Board Member Muzik thanked Regional Water Board staff for the excellent work for the past 12 months during these difficult times and wished all a safe, healthy, and happy holidays.

Vice-Chair Powell echoed these comments and particularly thanked staff on their hard work on the Triennial Review.

8. Colorado River Basin Water Board Chair's Report

Chair Wright echoed the Bord members' comments and encouraged them all to sign up for the Reginal Water Board lyris list to receive information on Regional Water Board notices and activities. She closed the meeting by wishing all a wonderful holiday.

9. Closed Session

There was no closed session held.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Next Board Meeting/Workshop

January 12, 2021