

CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN DIEGO REGION

Minutes of June 10, 2017
Environmental Justice Symposium

Cesar E. Chavez Campus, San Diego Community College District
San Diego, California 1901 Main Street, San Diego, CA 92113

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region, hereinafter San Diego Water Board, conducted its first Environmental Justice Symposium on Saturday, June 10, 2017 in the environmental justice community of Barrio Logan. *The official minutes of the Symposium are provided below, following the section entitled "Purpose of Symposium".*

Purpose of Symposium

The purpose of the Environmental Justice Symposium, which consisted of a day-long "Open Mic-Listening Session," was to provide a unique opportunity for members of our local communities to voice their water quality concerns directly to the Water Board Members.

The San Diego Water Board is committed to taking meaningful future actions that will not only benefit the health of the waters in our local environmental justice communities, but also benefit the health of the people that live nearby. To that end, the Water Board plans to adopt a Resolution of intent and commitment; prepare and present a "Report to the Legislature" summarizing our findings and recommendations; and develop and implement an "Environmental Justice Action Plan". The Environmental Justice Action Plan will describe a series of actions that the San Diego Water Board and its partners will undertake to achieve its ultimate environmental justice goal, namely, to restore and protect waters in these underserved areas and by doing so, make a positive difference in the health and lives of the local environmental justice community members. In the big picture, the San Diego Water Board will address these three key questions:

1. What are the most important concerns and needs of our local environmental justice communities with respect to water quality (e.g., drinking water and supply, urban creek restoration, consumption of San Diego Bay fish, cleanup of contaminated sediment sites in San Diego Bay, access to San Diego Bay, Tijuana River Valley, and in general, the protection of water resources or other environmental issue)? In other words, what are the key local environmental justice "problems" to be solved or addressed?
2. What actions could/should the San Diego Water Board take to address those concerns and needs (in either our traditional role or nontraditional role)?
3. What "novel approaches" to environmental justice issues could the San Diego Water Board and its partners undertake to support these communities? What potential reliable funding sources can be identified?

As it turns out, the June 10 Environmental Justice Symposium focused primarily on the first of these three questions, leaving plenty of next steps for the future.

Minutes of June 10, 2017 Environmental Justice Symposium

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region, hereinafter San Diego Water Board, conducted its first Environmental Justice Symposium on Saturday, June 10, 2017 at the Cesar E. Chavez Campus, San Diego Community College District located at 1901 Main Street, San Diego, California 92113. Open House doors opened at 9:00 a.m. and the "Open Mic-Listening Session" ran from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

At 10:00 a.m., Gita Kapahi, Symposium Facilitator, and Director, Office of Public Participation, State Water Resources Control Board, welcomed community and Water Board Members, elected officials, guest speakers, and staff and briefly summarized the purpose of the Symposium.

Board Members Present

Henry Abarbanel, Chairman; Gary Strawn, Vice Chairman; Tomas Morales; Stefanie Warren; Betty Olson; and Eric Anderson.

Absent

None

No Action Taken

Despite a quorum, no official Water Board action was taken.

San Diego Water Board Staff Present

Dave Gibson, James Smith, Julie Chan, Craig Carlisle, Deborah Jayne, Laurie Walsh, Chiara Clemente, Barry Pulver, Whitney Ghoram, and Emily Trevino

Other State Water Resources Control Board Staff Present

Marina Perez, Office of Public Participation; Catherine Hagan, Office of Chief Counsel; Sean Sterchi, Sean McCarthy, and Erica Wolski, Division of Drinking Water

Elected Officials and Guest Speakers on Agenda

David Alvarez, Council Member, District 8, City of San Diego
Georgette Gomez, Council Member, District 9, City of San Diego
Diane Takvorian, Executive Director, Environmental Health Coalition
Alexa Kleysteuber, Deputy Secretary for Border and Intergovernmental Relations, CalEPA
The Honorable Toni Atkins, State Senator, 39th State Senate District
Serge Dedina, Mayor, City of Imperial Beach

Other Elected and Public Officials Present

Greg Cox, Supervisor, San Diego County Board of Supervisors, District 1
Rafael Castellanos, Vice Chair, Board of Port Commissioners, San Diego Unified Port District
Carol Moore, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Laguna Woods
Mark West, Council Member, City of Imperial Beach

Other Elected Officials Represented and Accompanying Staff Present

Paola Guzman representing U.S. Congressman Juan Vargas, 51st Congressional District CA
Howard Ou representing U.S. Congressman Scott Peters, 52nd Congressional District CA
Lee Steuer representing U.S. Congresswoman Susan Davis, 53rd Congressional District CA

Tanya Duggan representing State Senator Ben Hueso, 40th State Senate District
Deanna Spehn, Policy Director, Senator Toni Atkins, 39th State Senate District
Ruth Martin, Policy Representative, San Diego City Council Member Alvarez, District 8
Ansermio Estrada, Digital Media Director, San Diego City Council Member Alvarez, District 8
Roberto Torres, Director of Communications, San Diego City Council Member Gomez, Distr 9

Public Attendance

Throughout the course of the day, there were approximately a total of 121 people that attended the Symposium. See attached Attendance Sheet.

Public Speakers

There were approximately 37 speakers that addressed the Water Board.

Comment Sheets

There were 28 Comment Sheets submitted.

Facilitator Kapahi recessed the morning "Open Mic-Listening Session" for lunch at approximately 1:00 p.m. and reconvened the afternoon "Open Mic-Listening Session" at 2:00 p.m. Following lunch, two raffle tickets were drawn and two Amazon Kindles presented to community members.

Topics Raised

Symposium speakers raised a wide spectrum of topics including, but not limited to:

Air Pollution	Changing U.S. Funding and Priorities for Border
Water and Air Nexus; Need for Greater Coordination Between Agencies	Federal Take-Aways for Water Issues and Need for Public Input
Right to Clean Water, Air, and Soil for All San Diegans	Infrastructure Needed On Both Sides of Border
Contaminated Sediment Cleanup Sites in San Diego Bay and elsewhere in Region	Mexico's Responsibilities and Accountabilities
Consumption of San Diego Bay Fish; Subsistence Fishers	Drinking Water Safety; Why is My New Faucet Corroding?
Access to San Diego Bay for Recreation; Shipyards and Industrial Land Use Adjacent to Residential Neighborhoods	CalEPA Environmental Justice Tools and Initiatives (Executive Order Mandating Environmental Justice, U.S.EPA's Office of Environmental Justice, CalEPA's Enhanced Inspections and Enforcement in Disadvantaged Communities, Availability of CalEPA Grants for Environmental Justice, EnviroScreen, Air Board's EJ Task Force)
Photo-Remediation/Plant Vegetation as Buffer Between Industrial and Residential Land Uses	San Diego Integrated Regional Water Management Program and Available Funding
Increase Trash Can Numbers, Initiate Green Waste Pickup, and Provide Large Item Disposal Events for Environmental Justice Communities	Urban Creek and Canyon Restoration
Sewage, Trash, and Sediment Issues in Tijuana River Valley	Paradise Creek Restoration

Litter Control; Styrofoam Ban	Environmental Justice for Tribal Nations; Tribal Issues; Kumeyaay Traditions/Lessons
Work with School Districts; Support Small Environmental Non-profits; Promote "Fun" Outreach	Use of Bio-Mimicry to Restore Rivers and Estuaries
Restore Revitalize De Anza Cove, Mission Bay	Zero Waste Polices/Sustainability Rights
Flooding/Clearing Channels	Private Homeowner's Flooding Issues
Watershed Filtration	Lakeside Needs Watershed Planning, Storm Water Infrastructure, Municipal Cooperation and Enforcement, and Funding; Empty Lots Become Dumping Grounds
Climate Change and Sea Level Rise	Volunteer Efforts in San Diego and Tijuana
Restoration of Natural Habitat Including Creeks, Streams, Bays, Estuaries and Coastal Lagoons	Illegal Dumping; Fracking
Local Politics and Economics of Water Quality Monitoring and Reporting; Coordination Among Various Monitoring Agencies; Who's in Charge?	Sustainability and Personal Responsibility in Headwaters
Does Industry Prevent Toxic Runoff from Entering San Diego Bay?	Barrio Logan Community Update Plan
Mid City/Chollas Creek Restoration	Educate and Advertise to Motivate Public
Water Quality Monitoring	Healing; Community Resistance
Transients/Homeless Encampments	Canyonlands; Watershed Education
Impacts on County Environmental Services	Engage and Train Youth; High School and College Student Programs; Urban Corps
Healing; Community Resistance; Supplemental Environmental Projects	Preserve Wetlands; Create Rain Gardens
Cleanups and Education Events	Coastal Access; Endangered Species
Water Quality in South San Diego Bay;	"Hold Elected Officials Accountable"; "We're Listening"; "Keep Us Informed"; "Inter-Connectiveness"
Protect Dwindling Saltmarsh Habitat	Potential Solutions
Enhanced Utilization of Enforcement Penalties	

Distillation of Most Important Issues

Water Board Staff are currently reviewing and compiling all of the comments submitted, recorded, and made at the Symposium and will prepare a summary of the comments. Staff will also identify a small number (3-5) of the most important issues (as measured primarily by the relative frequency each issue was raised).

Executive Officer's Remarks on Tijuana River Valley and Next Steps

Executive Officer Dave Gibson indicated that the Water Board plans to proceed with the development of two Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for the Tijuana River Valley; one for sediment and one for bacteria.

Water Board Chairman's Closing Remarks

Chairman Abarbanel commented that he was moved by what he had heard throughout the day and indicated that for him one of the highlights was the comment made by Council Member Georgette Gomez, "*We too often think of water and air as monetary and we forget that it's life*". Chairman Abarbanel thanked participants for coming and said "I absolutely will not close this session because this job is never done. The Water Board meets once a month...and I hope you will come to some of these meetings. Take some of the lessons we've heard today and tell us what you want and we will, within the law, do our very best to make those things happen."

Executive Officer's Closing Remarks

Executive Officer Gibson assured attendants that we had captured all of the comments made today and that we will be reporting out to the Board in August or September for two key reasons. The first reason is that we want to take what we've learned today and share it with all the other Regional Boards and State Board. We will do this at the upcoming Water Quality Coordinating Committee (WQCC) which is held once per year in October. The WQCC has often discussed the need for engaging and listening to the environmental justice communities so we want to pass along what we've learned today.

Secondly, this morning at the very beginning of the Symposium, we said that we wanted to hear what your concerns and priorities are. We wanted to hear from you for a very particular reason; our goal is to put what we've learned today into actions that will actually address your community's concerns. Our Board has its own Practical Vision and we develop an annual workplan every year that specifies what we will work on throughout the upcoming year and how we will pay for it. We wanted to know your concerns so we can plan work that reflects what we've heard today and incorporate it into our 2018 and future workplans.

We will share our annual workplan and budget with our Board and with you, the public, so you will have a chance to review both and comment. Then in February, you will have the opportunity to come before the Water Board and convey your thoughts on the particular approach(s) we've selected.

With that, Mr. Gibson said he would close this Symposium for today but leave open the conversation for it to continue in the days and weeks to come. "Me and my staff are available to you every weekday. Thank you very much for coming today."

Facilitator Kapahi concluded the Environmental Justice Symposium at 3:00 p.m.

These minutes were prepared by:

Signed by:

Deborah S. Jayne
Senior Environmental Scientist

David Gibson
Executive Officer

Attachments

1. Attendance Sheet for June 10, 2017 Environmental Justice Symposium
2. Revised Agenda for June 10, 2017 Environmental Justice Symposium

Acknowledgements

The San Diego Water Board would like to thank...

... The members of the local environmental justice communities who participated;

... Our Elected Officials, CalEPA Key Note Speaker, and Guest Speaker who took their time on a Saturday to support these communities and this Symposium;

... The Cesar E. Chavez Campus of the San Diego Community College District, for its very generous hospitality;

... Councilmember David Alvarez who, through the Environmental Center of San Diego, supported this Symposium;

... All our NGO and community partners and supporters, including (but not limited to) Environmental Center of San Diego, Sierra Club, Paradise Creek Educational Foundation, San Diego Canyonlands, Environmental Health Coalition, Olympia Beltran, and Tai Gomez;

...The Director and staff of the Office of Public Participation, State Water Resources Control Board;

And finally, a very special thanks to the Environmental Center of San Diego and the Sierra Club for donating the refreshments and for their significant contributions of time and resources. Thank you also to Ryan Brothers Coffee for keeping our coffee pots full.