STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
BOARD MEETING/HEARING
(Portion)

AUGUST 4, 2015

Coastal Hearing Room - Second Floor 1001 I Street Sacramento California 95814

scribed by: Kathryn Davis CSR No. 3808



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5	Chair Felicia Marcus
6	Vice-Chair Frances Spivy-Weber
7	Board Member Tam M. Doduc
8	Board Member Steven Moore
9	Board Member Dorene D'Amamo
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KATHRYN DAVIS & ASSOCIATES 916.567.4211

PORTION OF TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

(40:40 - 1:07:00)

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CHAIR FELICIA MARCUS: Item four. I'll turn to either Ms. Trgovcich or Mr. Lauffer because we did -- I know they were late -- but we did have some comments questioning or raising the specter of a conflict. And I know I contacted the two of you.

On the record here, I would like you to explain to us why there is not a conflict in what we have done in item number four.

MICHAEL LAUFFER: Okay. I will take this one.

Although, if you are interested, there is a presentation that the Division of Water Rights' staff put together.

By way of background, item four is a continuation of a program that was initiated by the Board last year as part of its drought response -- this is not a new endeavor -- to supplement staff within the Division of Water Rights with staff not in the State Water Project operations but staff from the Department of Water Resources.

It is important to appreciate what these staff are doing because our staff are tapped out on all the other drought-response activities. They are providing a supplement for some of the investigative work that the

Cathy Mrowka and John O'Hagan can talk about the specifics of it. But it is important to appreciate that these staff are operating under the direction of State Water Board staff. State Water Board staff prioritize and determine where they will go in the field.

My understanding is that all the staff that we asked for DWR to send over had to be from programs outside of the State Water Project operations. Keep in mind that the Department of Water Resources, like the Board, has a myriad of functions.

The staff are not deployed in the Delta area. My understanding is there was one staff, at one point in time, that was initially out on an inspection in the Delta. And our staff called them back and said, no, we are not going to be doing that in the future -- to avoid any perception.

The staff are primarily from the Fresno and

Northern California field office where we don't have a

physical presence in the Water Rights Division. And so
they are, essentially, providing us a geographic

multiplier.

CHAIR FELICIA MARCUS: Wait. Just so I understand -- sorry to interrupt the train of thought.

So other than that one person, our staff are doing the inspections in the Delta?

MICHAEL LAUFFER: That is my understanding.

And, again, John, Cathy -- and I know the Delta

Watermaster Michael George is here -- and can provide addition detail on that, if necessary, but that is my understanding.

So that is all our way of saying that in order to avoid any perception of conflict, there have been structural controls put in place by the Division of Water Rights.

I think it is important, though, to tease it out even further. Keep in mind that the Board is carrying on multiple functions here. These staff are not making determinations on water rights. They are assisting the Board's enforcement staff in conducting inspections. And there is not a due process, or under the Administrative Procedures Act, a rise to an unbiased, conflict-free investigator. Investigators and enforcement staff are specifically recognized as having an adversarial role. Just as the Department can participate as a party before the Board and proceedings, these enforcement staff would just be parties before the Board.

Ultimately, the Board, if this were to mature to

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an enforcement action, has to render a decision using its unbiased, conflict-free advisory staff, as well as the Board members themselves as the ultimate decision makers have to be unbiased and free of conflict.

I think that is an important distinction in terms of what the law requires. There isn't an appearance of bias standard with respect to even the decision makers. The courts have said you have to have more than an appearance of bias.

But in this particular case, we are not even talking about staff assisting the decision makers. We are talking about staff potentially in an investigative That is all a separate cold-heart legal analysis above and beyond the structural issues that we have done in putting together this contract, this inner-agency agreement, in order to supplement our resources.

Like I said, outside of the Delta there was one instance where a staff -- not from the State Water Project operations but from the Department of Water Resources -- did initially participate in an investigation in the Delta. But I will hand it over to John and Cathy, not so much to do a presentation, unless you would like one, but to correct any errors I may have made in mine.

CHAIR FELICIA MARCUS: I would love to hear

about that thought process. I'm feeling much better about it, quite apart from the legal, just as I think about the claims that will come up in the course of enforcement. Even with legal, it is a distraction from focusing on what we are doing.

But the fact that you've attempted and then corrected where someone went out to not have DWR do the investigations in the Delta makes me feel a little bit better about it. So I would love to hear your thought process on that. And I'm glad you are thinking that way.

JOHN O'HAGAN: This is John O'Hagan with the Division of Water Rights. Michael is nearly 100 percent correct on his comments.

CHAIR FELICIA MARCUS: I aspire to be nearly 100 percent correct on any given day.

BOARD MEMBER TAM DODUC: I think we need to note this special occasion. I don't think that has ever occurred before. Go for it, John.

JOHN O'HAGAN: At this time, he is correct that with the Department of Water Resources staffing, that we are using eight additional resources from the Department of Resources. We also are utilizing seven additional staff from the State Water Board.

And as Michael said, the Division's program

staff are tapped out. The divisions own enforcement resources are responsible for curtailment analysis. the Department has no curtailment analysis. We are responsible for all the complaints investigations. The are also responsible for analyzing and issuing the Informational Orders that are issued, and then the analysis of the data that is coming in.

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So the Department of Water Resources' staff are used only for field inspections of the water shortage notices. They do the field inspections, to see if people are diverting water after receiving a notice. And they complete a report. They do have a senior engineer on board that initially reviews the report. However, our senior staff are responsible for reviewing the report and determining if any follow-up activity is required.

So those resources are working for us and under our direction. We prioritize the inspections. We give them the inspection trips. They have nothing to do with where they go or which project they inspect.

Now, we did have on our records that have been entered a DWR staff doing an inspection in the Delta. If the Board desires, we can eliminate that completely in the future. However, there's other parts of the Delta that may be not sensitive to the parties you

received the letters from, but we can do that.

What is important to understand is that we have utilized Department resources in the past, in the past drought activities, when we need to make a field presence. The whole goal, and the stakeholders agreed, that field presence is a deterrent to violations. And, therefore, we are trying to utilize as many resources that we can to make that field presence to prevent violations. And then if violations occur, then it is our responsibility to follow-up.

Now, the Department staff will be called back in, as Michael said, if an enforcement action is necessary on an inspection. They may be because they are the eyewitness to the potential violation. So they would become a party to the prosecution team. But they are not the ones that would make any determination whether to move forward with any enforcement or anything like that.

CHAIR FELICIA MARCUS: I understand that if you are dealing with enforcement, obviously -- I mean, I just have my own experience from when I did prosecution work, which is minimal compared to what you all have been doing -- both at the local and the federal level.

And if we found a violation of something, it wasn't like a one-shot thing. We went back to see. It

wasn't based on one view. Do you go back and look again?

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JOHN O'HAGAN: We have conducted revisits on cases. Some other times we have records that we can look at and then utilize those records.

CHAIR FELICIA MARCUS: Now that is good if you can do that. I mean, it just seems to me, given how — and I totally get the legal piece of it — but given how emotionally fraught all of this is, and given the fact that we are moving into enforcement where no one has gone before in the curtailment arena, given the conflicts between various water rights holders, my advice would just to be extra careful — you know, help suspender's flying monkeys on these things.

And it sounds like you are already doing things to avoid appearance. Even if one doesn't have to, it is always good to because I'm just looking ahead, "A," you have the emotional implication you get from it. And, "B," I'm not looking forward to, I'm looking towards the distraction factor as we try to focus as clearly as we can, as we move into any potential enforcement phase.

VICE-CHAIR FRANCES SPIVY-WEBER: And I would like to know the relationship between the Watermaster and the Division of Water Rights and how you are reinforcing each other on this, particularly in this

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JOHN O'HAGAN: As far as I understand, no inspections are done in association with DWR staff with the Delta Watermaster. Michael is right here and he can comment on the program that he is operating on and whether he utilizes any Department resources.

MICHAEL GEORGE: The first thing I think is important -- this is Michael George, Delta Watermaster -- it is important that the administration of the State Water Law be identical throughout the state regardless of whether it is inside or outside the Delta.

That said, the Delta has a lot of specific factors. So my office and the Division of Water Rights work very closely together. We meet on a regular basis. We consult about strategic issues, about process, et cetera. So I think we are very closely aligned.

Now, I'd like to say that John is 100 percent correct. And, in fact, he is because we don't have -- we don't use any DWR staff for any inspections in the Delta.

Now the specific inspections that we have been doing in the Delta this year are primarily related to and motivated by verification of the voluntary water conservation program. All of those verification inspections are done by me or my staff. And we

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prioritize them, as we have reported before, by size. So we have done about 22 inspections to date. But that covers, in terms of acreage, almost half of the Central and South Delta where we are focused on for that program.

We recognize that there is hypersensitivity to the Department of Water Resources' personnel being in the Delta. There is always the question of what are they doing? And how are they going to relate? How is this going to come back?

We all recognize that when you drive a DWR truck in the Delta, nobody knows whether you are in the Project Management Division or in the Fish/Biology Division or anywhere else. So from that perspective, we work with the Department but we don't use the Department to go into the Delta to do inspections.

Now, as I've said, we work closely with various parts of the Department. For instance, the Department has traditionally been responsible for land use analysis, cropping patterns in the Delta. The last time DWR did a full land use analysis was 2007.

We needed to do it in 2015. However, in cooperation with the Department of Water Resources, we agreed with them to hire a third-party independent contractor to do that land use planning analysis.

So I do believe that the issue of a legal conflict is not presented here. I further believe, however, that it is very good policy for us as a Board, for us as the Watermaster's office, to demonstrate that we can be independent and that we are making our own decisions, uninfluenced by the project considerations that are so sensitive in the Delta.

CHAIR FELICIA MARCUS: John, since you are 100 percent correct today, will you also clarify for the folks who are may be in the room, or listening, the distinction between advisory and prosecution, staff levels of control and how it is? This is something that either does make my head want to explode, even though I have been in this field for a long time, so I suspect that I'm not alone.

JOHN O'HAGAN: Advisory versus prosecution. The advisory side of the State Water Board is dealing in a prosecution case. And the advisory side of the Board would be the members of the hearing team, and counsel that advises the Board on an enforcement action.

The prosecution team has its own attorneys from the Office of Enforcement that assist us in prosecution cases. And then our enforcement staff would be on that prosecution team. Usually it is a staff resource and senior engineer and Cathy, sitting next to me -- Cathy

And as an item comes up, there is an ethical wall that is built, that there is no communication between the advisory team and the prosecution team in any cases because of the rules of law. And we want to make sure that integrity is maintained. So we know very well who is on each side of the wall and we ensure the communication is not met in between those when a case comes before hearing.

CHAIR FELICIA MARCUS: You remind us of that constantly.

JOHN O'HAGAN: Yes, I do and I remind a lot of people that.

CHAIR FELICIA MARCUS: So, in essence, what happens, just for the layperson, is you all go out. You have folks out there investigating. You figure out how you are going to deal with each instance. Obviously, you don't start with a CDO. You start with talking to people or you have been talking to people.

And then if you get to the point of enforcement, then you've made that determination before. And then those that are doing the draft CDO, or the complaint in a given situation, are then on the prosecution team.

And then you have a team that is advisory that can help

us with the appeals.

And the reason for it is that we are a hearing board to hear it -- I don't know if "appeal" is the right word to use -- but to say that your prosecution team is wrong or that they want different terms or whatever.

JOHN O'HAGAN: At a hearing, the prosecution team is just another party like the parties that are alleged to have committed a violation. And the actions that we take are notices of violation, either an ACL complaint -- it is not an order. So the complaint that we issue and an ACL, which is a penalty fine, or a notice of draft cease and desist, it is not a final order. Both of those actions that the prosecution initiates are not orders. They give a party their due rights to a hearing before the Board, if requested within a specific timeline that is specified in the Water Code. It is 20 days.

So once that hearing request comes in, that's when the parties -- you know, we are prosecution. We become a party. And we are always able to meet with the alleged offender at any time to discuss settlement; but the hearing team and the Board are not privy to that discussion.

CHAIR FELICIA MARCUS: Michael, is he

MICHAEL LAUFFER: Yes. Although there is one thing -- unrelated to what John said, it was actually part of Chair Marcus' question, which I want to make sure it is appreciated.

You indicated that the dividing line would be when the decision is made to issue a complaint or issue a draft cease and desist order. And I think you are well aware of it -- so there are no implications drawn by folks outside of the room -- that is when you indicated that the teams separated.

In fact, that separation occurs before then.

Nobody who has been involved in the investigation can serve in an advisory capacity to the Board. And that is not just the Board members, obviously. That is the staff advising the Board.

CHAIR FELICIA MARCUS: Thank you. That is very helpful. I'm always happy to is be less than 100 percent correct, so long as someone will correct me. I believe in the iterate process. So I'll just keep making assertions and then you can correct them in the interest of truth. That is very helpful, actually. I didn't realize it was that.

BOARD MEMBER DORENE D'AMANO: I have a question and it is unrelated to this specific issue that is

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before us. Could you talk a little bit about the role of CDFW? It is always good to have more eyes and ears. And I know in some watersheds, they are working closely providing information but I don't have the big picture.

JOHN O'HAGAN: CDFW is working with us in other drought-related programs with the Office of Enforcement and Division staff. We are working in the coastal watersheds on cannabis problems. We also are working with DFW on the emergency regulation package for the Russian River. And so they assist us on that.

And as you know, on the Russian River Frost Regulation, the Department of Fish and Wildlife also serves as a consulting party for the water management groups that are formed there. So they assist them in determining corrective actions and then also stream gauge placements.

MICHAEL LAUFFER: And the only thing I would add to that, just to be aware of it, following this spring's drought legislation, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, independent of the Division of Water Rights' staff, now have the authority to issue complaints alleging there has been an unauthorized diversion of water. And, therefore, trigger its own hearing process before the Board.

Those are different than the complaints filed by

MICHAEL GEORGE: I would just say after that, that the CDFW is also a participant in the realtime drought operations process, which the State Board, through the Division of Water Rights, as well as the Delta Watermaster, is involved; but we don't use them as inspection staff in the Delta.

CHAIR FELICIA MARCUS: Thank you. That was all very helpful and illuminating. And I thought that important, even if nobody was here.

I move adoption of number four.

JOHN O'HAGAN: I had one comment that I'd like to point out that the draft resolution needs an edit to paragraph three. Paragraph three says 100,000, and that figure should be one million.

CHAIR FELICIA MARCUS: I would have caught that, huh, just doing the math. All right.

BOARD MEMBER TAM DODUC: I will second the motion with the request to staff -- even though I think it was the local agencies of the North Delta that did not send a representative today, they did take the time to write to us. So if one of you could reach out --

there were three, I thought we had one. So if you could reach out and let them know and explain what you did

CHAIR FELICIA MARCUS: Very good. Follow-up question? So with those changes, additions?

(All ayes.)

CHAIR FELICIA MARCUS: Thank you all very much. Let's move right into the drought report.

already started it in part so --

JOHN O'HAGAN: All right. I think Les Grober is going to join me on this. I'll just follow-up before

As far as we were talking about inspections -just an update. We are at about 326 water shortage notice inspections have been conducted. Of those, 78 have been done by Department of Water Resource staffing, just to give you a handle on it. And there has been an additional 100, roughly 100 inspections conducted by our staff related to complaints or joint agency investigations in the drought activity. So that is to give you an idea.

And as you recall, we are trying to reach 1,000 inspections during the drought year. Last year we were close to that, I believe, 900 and some odd. But that is our target for this year. And we feel that we will be going through October, so we do have more time.

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And it did take us some time to get started up and retrain resources. Each year we do this. And when we have different resources, we invest a lot of time in training them with -- field safety training is a mandatory requirement, and all the other activity that we have to do. And then equip them with the proper training on using our ERIM system and then also GPS units.

As far as curtailments, if you look at our curves on the website, we have not issued new curtailment notices -- I should say water shortage notices. At this time, the demand in the watersheds are going slightly down after July is the peak month for water demand in our analysis. But the supply is not getting any better.

So we are looking at some tributaries of the Sacramento River and watching those very closely to see if additional curtailments are necessary. And we are also looking at other areas of the state to see if there is a need for further curtailment.

San Joaquin, we have -- looking at some of the other tributaries -- because, as you know, we have done the Merced River down to a lower level and then also the

upper San Joaquin. Overall in the Sacramento/San Joaquin, we are adding 1903, an earlier priority date. And if you look at the supply and demand where we are bouncing around that for the Sacramento, on the San Joaquin, it is slightly below that but there are some very large diverters that would take up that space. So we want to make sure that we do curtailments or notices where necessary and appropriate. So that is why we are looking at the tributary level on these issues. And I believe that is all we have. (Whereupon, end of transcribed portion.)

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2		
3	State of California)	
4) ss. County of Sacramento)	
5		
6	I certify that the statements in the	
7	foregoing hearing were transcribed in the	
8	within-entitled cause by audio; that said hearing was	
9	taken at the time and place therein named; that the	
10	testimony of said witnesses was reported by me, a duly	
11	Certified Shorthand Reporter of the State of California	
12	authorized to administer oaths and affirmations, and	
13	said testimony was thereafter transcribed into	
14	typewriting.	
15	I further certify that I am not of counsel or	
16	attorney for either or any of the parties to said	
17	hearing, nor in any way interested in the outcome of the	
18	cause named in said hearing.	
19	IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand	
20	this 30th day of August, 2015.	
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