
Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board

Meeting Minutes In-person/Hybrid Meeting

Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board Office
Carmel Room

Los Angeles, CA 90013

May 25, 2023

Chair Camacho called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

She explained the process for participation in the virtual meeting, noting that for those who only want to listen or watch the meeting, the Board's customary webcast was available, and that the Board has Spanish translation services available through the Zoom platform for those who want to listen or participate in the meeting in Spanish. She provided instructions on how to join the Zoom meeting for those wishing to provide comments on an agenda item, and she announced that the meeting was being recorded.

Juan Carlos Juarez, one of the Spanish interpreters, provided instructions on how to participate in the meeting in Spanish.

Item 1 – Roll Call

Board Members Present: Sabrina Ashjian, Norma Camacho, Marissa Christiansen (Remote), Michael Méndez, Irma Muñoz (Remote), David Nahai and James Stahl

Note: Marissa Christiansen and Irma Muñoz recused themselves from Item 8. Irma Muñoz departed early after closed session.

Staff Present: Susana Arredondo, Jenny Newman, Hugh Marley, Helen Rowe, Adriana Nuñez, Sophie Froelich, Tamarin Austin, Khalid Abdullah, Alfredo Duran, Gerardo Rabelo, LB Nye, Russ Colby, Arthur Heath, Yue Rong, Jeong-Hee Lim, Susana Lagudis, Brian Anderson, Don Tsai, Peter Ho, Ashley Olmeda, Céline Gallon, Steven Webb and Augustine Anijelo

Item 2 – Order of Agenda

Susana Arredondo, Executive Officer asked that Item 10, the information item on the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project, be heard after Item 7, public forum, then Item 9, the General NPDES Permit for Discharge from Fireworks Displays, then Item 8, the NPDES Permit for the Joint Water Pollution Control Plant.

NORMA CAMACHO, CHAIR | SUSANA ARREDONDO, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

There were no objections to the recommended changes.

Item 3 – Approval of Draft Meeting Minutes for the April 27, 2023, Meeting.

MOTION: Board Member Stahl made a motion to approve the April 27, 2023, draft meeting minutes.

Seconded by: Vice Chair Nahai
Motion carried: Approved by roll call vote.

Sabrina Ashjian - Yea
Norma Camacho – Yea
Marissa Christiansen – Abstained
Michael Méndez – Yea
Irma Muñoz – Abstained
David Nahai – Yea
James Stahl – Yea

Item 4 – Board Member Communications

- a. Ex Parte Disclosure (Board Members will identify any discussions they may have had requiring disclosure pursuant to Government Code section 11430.40.)

Board Member Muñoz reported on two ex parte disclosures.

She went on a tour of the Ballona Wetlands with Dr. Margot Griswold. They discussed implications of saltwater being introduced to the current wetlands, birds, wildlife and general vegetation.

Board Member Muñoz had a telephone call with Patricia McPherson. Margot Griswold and Chief Anthony Morales.

Legal Counsel, Tamarin Austin, clarified for the record that Ballona Wetlands is not a pending Item before the Los Angeles Water Board and the observations shared by Board Member Muñoz were not ex parte disclosures.

Chair Camacho reported on one ex parte disclosure. She participated in the Thelma Hansen symposium regarding exploring the future of water in agriculture. Chair Camacho generally discussed the status of the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program and the draft general WDRs.

- b. Board Member Reports (The Board Members may discuss communications, correspondence, or other items of general interest relating to matters within the Board's jurisdiction.)

Vice Chair Nahai reported on the following: On May 19, 2023, the Los Angeles Business Council (LABC) held a Mayoral Housing Summit. Vice Chair Nahai is the Chair of the LABC. The homelessness and housing crisis was discussed

during the summit. The summit was attended by Mayor Karen Bass and Mayor Darrell Steven Steinberg.

Vice Chair Nahai requested that legal counsel provide an analysis of the Supreme Court decision restricting the EPA's authority to regulate wetlands.

Board Member Méndez reported on the following: He toured the Ballona Wetlands along with Los Angeles Water Board staff. The tour was attended by members of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as well as ecologists and environmentalists that are concerned about the wetlands.

Board Member Méndez toured farms in Ventura County with Los Angeles Water Board staff.

Board Member Christiansen reported on the following: In April 2023, she hosted a meeting in Dallas, Texas, for water environmental philanthropists. One of the topics discussed at the meeting was irrigated agriculture water uses in the Colorado River Basin. Board Christiansen mentioned that she was in Oakland attending a staff retreat for her job and one of the topics for the retreat was formulating strategy for water rights in California.

Board Member Muñoz reported on the following: For Oceans Day, fifteen women from the Northeast community met and discussed the health of the ocean with elected officials. The event was attended by approximately 400 people from California including Assemblymember Luz Rivas, Chair of the Natural Resources Committee. Board Member Muñoz encouraged members of the public who are concerned about the ocean to attend next year's Ocean Day event.

Board Member Muñoz welcomed newly appointed Executive Officer, Susana Arredondo to the Los Angeles Water Board.

Chair Camacho mentioned that Dr. Thomas Harter from University of California, Davis Department of Land, Air and Water Resources was a panelist for the Thelma Hansen Symposium and had an interesting presentation on nitrate pesticides and sustainable groundwater quality management in agricultural. She would like to invite Dr. Harter to the Los Angeles Water Board to provide an abbreviated presentation.

Chair Camacho suggested that the Los Angeles Water Board discuss how ChatGPT, the artificial intelligent software is being used in a variety of landscapes and investigate what artificial intelligence applications could be utilized within the Los Angeles Water Board landscape.

Item 5 – Executive Officer's Report

Susana Arredondo, Executive Officer, provided updates of the following items:

1) On May 12, 2023, the Los Angeles Water Board staff met with Paola Dela Cruz-Pérez

and Cindy Donis from East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice along with Juntos Florence-Firestone Together members Yanel Saenz and Ashley Orona. They discussed regulatory history, site assessment activities, findings, remedial operations and mitigation measures being implemented by the U.S EPA and the Regional Board.

2) On May 3, 2023, Ventura County Public Works Agency, Water and Sanitation notified the Los Angeles Water Board of an ongoing sanitary sewer overflow that discharged raw sewage into the Arroyo Simi in the City of Moorpark. On May 4, 2023, warning signs notifying the public of sewage contamination were posted along the Arroyo Simi up to 4 miles downstream. The public advisory notification ended on May 10, 2023. A technical report of the Sewer Sanitary Overflow is due to the Los Angeles Water Board by June 17, 2023.

3) On April 25, and May 16, 2023, the Stormwater Compliance & Enforcement Unit held public workshops for permittees, owners, environmental professionals, local agencies, and the public.

4) On April 28, 2023, the City of Ventura secured a \$173 million Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act loan for the Ventura WaterPure Program. The Ventura WaterPure Program is currently in its design phase and is projected for full implementation by 2030.

5) On May 15, 2023, Susana Arredondo, Executive Officer, Board Member Méndez and Los Angeles Water Board staff toured the Ballona Wetlands regarding the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project.

6) On May 22, 2023, Susana Arredondo, Executive Officer, Board Member Méndez and Los Angeles Water Board staff toured farms led by Ventura County Agriculture Irrigated Lands Group.

7) On May 17, 2023, the groundwater permitting staff attended a community meeting regarding the tentative permit renewal for the Trancas Water Pollution Control Plant. Los Angeles Water Board staff explained the new effluent discharge limits for bacteria. The tentative permit is scheduled for the Los Angeles Water Board's consideration at the June 22, 2023, meeting. Comments are due by May 30, 2023.

Chair Camacho opened the floor for comments from the Board members.

Board members Stahl requested a summary table on the status of all items referred to the Attorney General be included in the monthly Executive Officer's report.

Item 6 – Update from State Water Board [Board Member Laurel Firestone]

Board Member Laurel Firestone provided updates on the following items: 1) Flood Emergency Response, 2) a May 18, 2023, State Water Board nutrient management workshop, 3) the annual State Water Board oversight hearing on the Salton Sea management program for phase one, 4) the SCAP program, 5) Governor Newsom's release of the revised proposed budget for the new fiscal year, and 6) the State Water

Board meeting scheduled for June 2023, which will include an overview of the state's drought and conservation reporting.

Chair Camacho opened the floor for comments and questions from the Board members.

Board member Stahl made comments. Laurel Firestone responded to his comments.

Item 7 – Public Forum

Speakers:

- Richard Watson & Associates, Consultants to the Los Cerritos Channel Watershed Group

Chair Camacho opened the floor for comments and questions from the Board members.

Vice Chair Nahai, Board Members Stahl, Muñoz and Chair Camacho made comments and asked questions. Jenny Newman, Assistant Executive Officer responded to the Board members' comments and questions.

Speakers (cont.)

- Benjamin Harris, Los Angeles Waterkeeper
- Robert Roy van de Hoek, Defend Ballona Wetlands
- Ray Tahir, TECS Environmental

Jenny Newman responded to comments made by Benjamin Harris. Board Member Stahl responded to comments made by Ray Tahir.

Break: 10:20 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Chair Camacho announced Item 10 the Information Item

Item 10 – The California Department of Fish and Wildlife will provide an overview and update on the Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project.

Staff Introduction: Ashley Olmeda, 401 Program staff.

CA Department of Fish and Wildlife Presentation: Richard Brody, Land Manager and Emely Lopez, California Coastal Conservancy

Chair Camacho opened the floor for questions from the Board members.

Board Members Méndez, Muñoz, Vice Chair Nahai and Chair Camacho made comments and asked questions. Responses to Board members' comments and questions were made by Richard Brody and Emely Lopez.

Speakers

- Chairperson Anthony Morales, Gabrieleno Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians

Chair Camacho opened the floor for Board members comments and questions.

Chair Camacho made comments and asked questions. Chairperson Anthony Morales, Jenny Newman and Richard Brody responded to comments and questions made by Chair Camacho.

Speakers (cont.)

- Neysa Frechette, Friends of Ballona Wetlands
- Katherine Pease, Heal the Bay
- Kathy Knight, Ballona Ecosystem Education Project (B.E.E.P.)
- Patricia McPherson, Grassroots Coalition
- Margot Griswold, Audubon Society
- Benjamin Harris, Los Angeles Waterkeeper
- Marcia Hanscom, Ballona Wetlands Institute
- Chris Ku
- Jane Velez-Mitchell, Unchained TV
- David Kay
- Walter Lamb, Ballona Wetlands Land Trust
- Susanne Cumming, Defend Ballona Wetlands
- Robert Roy van de Hoek, Defend Ballona Wetlands
- Wendy Rosen
- Beth Holden-Garland
- Ann Cantrell, Sierra Club Los Cerritos Wetlands Task Force
- Anna Christensen, Sierra Club Los Cerritos Wetlands Task Force
- David Warren

Chair Camacho opened the floor for Board members' comments.

Vice Chair Nahai, Board Member Muñoz, and Chair Camacho made comments and asked questions. Legal Counsel, Tamarin Austin, responded to comments and questions made by Vice Chair Nahai.

Lunch Break/Closed Session***Item 11 – Closed Session***

Legal counsel, Sophie Froelich, announced the Board was going into closed session to discuss Item 11.i.

Emely Lopez from the Coastal Conservancy stated that a tribal leader was in the Zoom meeting to speak on Item 10 and was overlooked. Los Angeles Water Board staff Céline Gallon and Chair Camacho responded.

Board Member Méndez apologized for the oversight and recommended that tribal members submit letters to the Los Angeles Water Board regarding Item 10 and he would read them.

(The Board met in closed session from 1:11 p.m. to 2:14 p.m.)

Chair Camacho: Announced agenda Item 8 and administered the oath.

Item – 8 Consideration of Tentative Waste Discharge Requirements and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit Renewal for the Joint Outfall System, Joint Water Pollution Control Plant, Carson, CA

Staff Presentation: Steven Webb, Municipal Permitting Unit Supervisor

Speakers:

- Benjamin Harris, Los Angeles Waterkeeper
- Erika Bensch, Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts
- Martha Tremblay, Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts
- Robert Roy van de Hoek, Defend Ballona Wetlands

Chair Camacho opened the floor for Board members comments and questions.

Board Members Ashjian, Stahl, Méndez, Vice Chair Nahai, and Chair Camacho made comments and asked questions. Steven Webb, Benjamin Harris, Annalisa Moe (Heal the Bay) and Jenny Newman responded to Board members' comments and questions.

MOTION: Board Member Stahl made a motion to approve Item 8 with the proposed change sheet.

Seconded by: Vice Chair Nahai

Motion carried: Approved by roll call vote.

Sabrina Ashjian - Yea
Norma Camacho – Yea
Marissa Christiansen – Recused
Michael Méndez – Yea

Irma Muñoz – Recused
David Nahai – Yea
James Stahl – Yea

Chair Camacho: Announced agenda Item 9 and administered the oath.

Item – 9 Consideration of Tentative Waste Discharge Requirements and General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit Issuance for Discharges of Residual Firework Pollutants from Public Fireworks Displays to Surface Waters in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties.

Staff Presentation: Augustine Anijelo, General Permitting Unit Supervisor.

Speakers:

- Councilmember Nils Nehrenheim, City of Redondo Beach
- Benjamin Harris, Los Angeles Waterkeeper
- Livia Borak Beaudin, Costal Environmental Rights Foundation
- Gary Brown, Pyro Spectaculars
- Caroline Wilson, Collier Walsh Nakazawa, LLP
- Anna Christensen, Sierra Club Los Cerritos Wetlands Task Force
- Mike Donelon
- Ann Cantrell, Sierra Club Los Cerritos Wetlands Task Force
- Marcia Hanscom, Ballona Wetlands Institute
- Robert Roy van de Hoek, Defend Ballona Wetlands

Chair Camacho opened the floor for Board member comments and questions.

Board Members Ashjian, Stahl, Méndez, Christiansen, Vice Chair Nahai and Chair Camacho made comments and asked questions. Augustine Anijelo, Jenny Newman, Tamarin Austin and Jeong-Hee Lim responded to Board members' comments and questions.

Board Member Stahl requested that Los Angeles Water Board staff report to the Board in August 2023 after the 4th of July, the number of permittees that applied for the permit. Vice Chair Nahai requested a report on how the permit was publicized to the public.

MOTION: Board Member Méndez made a motion to approve Item 9, the revised tentative order, with recommendations from Board members to add sulfur monitoring language to the permit.

Seconded by: Board Member Ashjian
Motion carried: Approved by roll call vote.

Sabrina Ashjian - Yea
Norma Camacho – Yea
Marissa Christiansen – No

Michael Méndez – Yea
Irma Muñoz – Absent
David Nahai – Yea
James Stahl – Yea

The meeting was adjourned at 5:03 p.m. (For more detailed information on any matter at our meetings, you may contact Helen Rowe at (213) 576-6612 or email at: Helen.Rowe@waterboards.ca.gov and she will provide an electronic copy of the transcript or audio, when available.)

Written and submitted by Helen Rowe, Board Clerk on: June 26, 2023

Signature on File: Helen Rowe