

**MINUTES  
OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
SAN JOAQUIN RIVER EXCHANGE CONTRACTORS WATER AUTHORITY  
HELD FRIDAY, AUGUST 6, 2021**

The Board of Directors of the *San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority (SJRECWA)* met in Regular Session on Friday, August 6, 2021 in the Board Room of the *San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority*, 541 “H” Street, City of Los Banos, County of Merced, State of California.

The following persons were present:

**REPRESENTATIVES:**

**Central California Irrigation District (CCID):** James O’Banion, Chairman; Jarrett Martin, Manager

**San Luis Canal Company (SLCC):** John Wiersma, Manager

**STAFF MEMBERS:**

Chris White, Executive Director; Steve Chedester, Director of Policy and Programs; Joann White, Director of Finance and Administration; Adam Hoffman, Water Resources Specialist; and Darlene O’Brien, Administrative Assistant

**OTHERS:**

Andrew McClure, Minasian, Meith, Soares, Sexton & Cooper LLP; Kimberly Brown, CCC Director

In accordance with the Governor’s Executive Order (N-29-20) and the declared State of Emergency as a result of the threat of COVID-19, the following members of the Exchange Contractors’ Board of Directors and staff, and members of the public participated via teleconference:

**REPRESENTATIVES:**

**Firebaugh Canal Water District (FCWD):** Mike Stearns, Director; Jeff Bryant, Manager  
**Columbia Canal Company (CCC):** Chris Cardella, Vice-Chairman; Randy Houk, Manager

**OTHERS:**

David Cory, Consultant; Rick Iger, Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group; Don Wright, Journalist; Lauren Layne, Baker, Manock & Jensen; Manny Amorelli, James Irrigation District; Steve Stadler, San Luis Water District; Antonio Bejarano, Westlands Water District; Jim Stilwell, Baker Farms; Mike Henry, Consultant; Sarah Woolf, Water Wise; and Andy Neal, Woodard & Curran (9:25 a.m. – 9:41 a.m.)

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman O’Banion opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and asked Darlene O’Brien to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. The Executive Director proceeded to take roll call of the Board members to confirm a quorum.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The unapproved minutes from the July 2, 2021 Board meeting were presented.

Director Stearns made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Nickel. Upon a roll call vote, the motion was passed by a 4-0 vote.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

There was no public participation presented.

**BOARD TO APPROVE THE JULY, 2021 EXPENDITURES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT:**

Joann White presented the July 2021 Expenditure List and Financial Report and provided highlights of the revenue and expenses for the General, Water Transfer, Water Resources Plan, and San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority Budget Comparisons. An outline of the Cash Activity Report was then presented.

Following the report, a motion was made by Director Nickel and seconded by Director Cardella to approve the Expenditure List and Financial Report as presented. Upon a roll call vote, the motion was passed by a 4-0 vote.

The Finance Committee meeting minutes of June 28, 2021 were provided for informational purposes.

**WATER REPORT:**

Water Resources Specialist, Adam Hoffman reviewed his water report that included the following data: Exchange Contractors' total demands: 2,014 cubic feet per second (c.f.s.), of that, 1,509 c.f.s. from the Mendota Pool and 505 c.f.s. from the Delta Mendota Canal (DMC). He then reported that releases from Friant Dam into the San Joaquin River are 275 c.f.s., with 10 c.f.s. at Gravelly Ford.

Mr. Hoffman next reported on the following current reservoir storage: Shasta – 1,423,684 acre feet (a.f.); San Luis Reservoir – 397,456 a.f., stating that the Federal share in the San Luis Reservoir is 13,000 a.f., but noting that in reality its showing negative as there was a borrow of 50,000 a.f. from the State Water Project in mid-July, with the State project water at 379,678 a.f. Next, he stated that Millerton is at 224,998 a.f. of storage and the Los Banos Creek Detention Dam is at 18,217 a.f. The Upper San Joaquin Basin combined storage is 372,597 a.f., which is about 82% of average, and the accumulated full natural flow into Shasta Lake is 42% of average. Mr. Hoffman noted that this is the driest year in terms of inflow since 1977 and next year's target is 4 million a.f. for a non-critical year of inflow into Shasta.

The Delta Operation's data was then provided as follows: inflows are 8,510 c.f.s., with exports at 1,248 c.f.s. Both the State and Federal water projects were sharing a unit in July, they have since broken that up and come into compliance with the 3-Mile Slough target for salinity. The Jones unit is now dedicated to CVP and the small unit at Banks at about 200 c.f.s. for the Federal side, and that

should hold through the end of the month. The outflow index is 3,062 c.f.s., noting the controlling factor for this is the Delta water quality.

In conclusion, Mr. Hoffman referred to the following additional data included in his report for informational purposes: Current Reservoir Conditions, San Luis Reservoir Storage Levels, Shasta Dam Operations, Millerton Lake Daily Operation's Report, and Daily CVP Water Supply Report.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

**Operations** – The Executive Director reported that most of this past month's work has been focused on operations and managing through this critical water year. There will be some additional borrow by the Federal side from the State Water Project in order to get through the summer.

**Legislative** – The Exchange Contractors are working with San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority (SLDMWA) on putting together some tours for interested legislatures, including Adam Gray. We also continue to work on appropriations for help with our Water Resources Plan projects.

**SGMA/Groundwater** – Executive Director White stated that Manager Martin has reported that the summer pumping data is being collected at this time for next year's submittal of the annual report. Manager Martin has also participated in some facilitated meetings with other Groundwater Sustainability Agencies within the subbasin. Still waiting on the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to review all the Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP) within our subbasin.

**Subsidence** – The July subsidence survey has been completed and results should be posted next week. We have been working with Triangle T Water District on the renewal of the subsidence agreement and worked out a revised pumping plan for this year which was approved by their hydrologist and Dr. Kenneth Schmidt. The Mendota Pool Group began pumping in June instead of September as per a previous request and approval and their pumps were shut off in mid-July.

**DIRECTOR OF POLICY & PROGRAMS REPORT:**

Steve Chedester provided a report on the following issues:

**San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP)**

- *Mendota Pool Fish Screen and Control Structure* –The reverse flow facility is currently on hold while we wait for U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) authorization to begin 60% design. The fish recapture facility has been transitioned over to Reclamation and no new design work has begun at the Technical Service Center (TSC). Jacobs will assist TSC with the design options. Due to new COVID restrictions, the in-person meeting with the design team and fisheries has been postponed until further notice.
- *Sack Dam, Fish Passage and Arroyo Canal Fish Screen* – Close coordination with TSC/Reclamation on the fish screen and passage will be required. Currently developing a design coordination process with SJRRP.
- *Mowry Bridge* – Construction is now complete.

**WATER RESOURCES PLAN (WRP) – UPDATE:**

Steve Chedester provided the following WRP updates:

**Orestimba Creek Recharge and Recovery Project** – The initial cultural and biological surveys are complete, the in-depth cultural report should be completed by mid-August, which can then be submitted to Reclamation for the long-term permitting approval process. CCID has obtained permits from Stanislaus County to drill test holes with completion of the holes by the end of September. We are anticipating receiving the 60% design on the Delta Mendota Canal (DMC) turnouts, piping and diversion structure by mid-September. CCID completed the final agreement on the Storm Water Grant and submitted it to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) in July. There will be a site visit with Reclamation next week.

**Los Banos Creek Recharge and Recovery Project** – Initial discussion with Reclamation occurred July 12<sup>th</sup> for the long-term agreement. Due to drought and curtailment orders, Reclamation requested we follow up in September.

**Community Projects Funding** – Congressman Costa selected the Los Banos Creek Detention Dam Reservoir Regulation and Storage Project as one of his ten projects to support and we were notified in July that the House committee included \$500,000 for the project. The Los Banos Creek Storage project and the Los Banos Creek Recharge and Recovery project were also submitted to Senator Feinstein’s office and both projects were included in the request to the Energy and Water Committee. We are working with the Senator’s office to obtain the full \$3.5 million request.

**Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir (DPCR)** - Andy Neal of Woodard and Curran provided an update on the recent activities of the reservoir project:

- The Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for potential dam design consultants has been released with a response date for August 31.
- Recently received a revised Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) schedule from Reclamation indicating a Draft EIS release in November 2021 and a Record of Decision for August 2022.
- All the necessary input for Reclamation’s reviewer has been provided to satisfy the cost analysis work needed to get the FAA in place which will provide the project partners access to funds awarded to date.
- A new public outreach consultant has been hired.
- Working on the Water Storage Investment Program (WSIP) application for further funding opportunities.
- Biweekly meetings are scheduled with PG&E and Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) regarding the utility relocation.

In conclusion, Executive Director White reported that under the WIIN Act, we have been informed that Reclamation has recommended the DPCR project for \$15 million matching funds for 2022; next step is approval by the Office of Management & Budget and Congress.

**BAY-DELTA WATER QUALITY AND REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD (RWOCB) REPORT:**

Consultant, David Cory gave the following update:

**Groundwater Protection Formulas, Values and Targets:** Irrigated Lands Coalitions submitted the Groundwater Protection Values for each high vulnerability township in the Central Valley. Submission of the Values is the first step of a two-step process to develop both township level Values and Targets. Township level Values are difficult to interpret until the corresponding Targets are developed for that township, the average nitrate loading per acre is significantly lower for most townships than previously estimated. Coalitions are working diligently to develop a methodology to establish nitrogen loading Targets.

**LEGISLATIVE REPORT:**

**State:** Executive Director White presented Dominic DiMare's report noting the current budget status of the state.

**Federal:** The Executive Director referred to Nancy Williams' report discussing the FY22 Appropriations process; Congressman Valadao's water bill; details of the Biden infrastructure initiative; and Water, Oceans, and Wildlife (WOW) Subcommittee hearing on the FY22 budget request for Reclamation.

**ATTORNEY'S REPORT:**

Legal counsel reviewed the following issues and said that some of the discussions will take place in Closed Session:

- SWRCB Draft Emergency Curtailment and Reporting Regulation and Notice of Water Unavailability
- Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) petition for reconsideration of order approving Temperature Management Plan
- SGMA Litigation
- Court of Claims

**FOUR ENTITIES' MANAGER REPORTS:**

**San Luis Canal Company:**

Manager Wiersma reported that SLCC delivered less than average in July which is to be expected for a critical water year. Currently gearing up for construction season and recently notified the shareholders of the number of canals being shut down to facilitate the maintenance. Staff has been spending a significant amount of time and effort planning for next year's operations and preparing for the worst-case scenario.

**Central California Irrigation District:**

Manager Martin reported that July demands were lower than usual but to be expected for this year. Staff has been focusing on coordination with the cities and recent housing developments, trying to

stay ahead of the new construction/expansion and making sure we are coordinating CCID's infrastructure and mitigating impacts to the growers. Staff is also planning and preparing for next year's operations.

**Firebaugh Canal Company:**

Manager Bryant reported that they have been working with growers to reschedule some of their water as it pertains to the critical year. Time was spent working on environmental work on the final 2.5 miles of Canal #2. The Drainage Authority is continuing to meet with Reclamation to reinstate the drainage funding.

**Columbia Canal Company:**

Manager Houk stated that they are trying to get through this critical year, with deep wells being used. Harvesting has started and about four growers are considering new wells in preparation for next year.

**INFORMATIONAL:**

**Dates to Remember:**

- Orestimba Creek Project On-Site Visit with Reclamation – August 10, 2021
- Follow-up call with State on potential funding for DPCR – August 11, 2021
- Manager's meeting on current operations/schedules – August 12, 2021

**CLOSED SESSION:**

Chairman O'Banion adjourned the meeting to Closed Session and called for a short recess at 10:07 a.m. Chairman O'Banion reconvened the meeting to Closed Session at 10:15 a.m.

The Chairman returned the meeting to Open Session at 11:00 a.m. and announced that direction was given to staff and legal counsel. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

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JAMES O'BANION, CHAIRMAN

Attest a true record of proceedings had  
And taken at the foregoing meeting, our  
Presence thereat and our consent thereto.

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CHRIS WHITE, SECRETARY

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JAMES L. NICKEL, DIRECTOR

(Signatures Continue on Following Page)

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MIKE STEARNS, DIRECTOR

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CHRIS CARDELLA, VICE-CHAIRMAN