

**MINUTES  
OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
SAN JOAQUIN RIVER EXCHANGE CONTRACTORS WATER AUTHORITY  
HELD FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2022**

The Board of Directors of the *San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority (SJRECWA)* met in Regular Session on Friday, November 4, 2022 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):** Eric Fontana, Director

**San Luis Water District (SLCC):** Cannon Michael, Alternate Director; John Wiersma, Manager

**Firebaugh Canal Water District (FCWD):** Mike Stearns, Director, Jeff Bryant, Manager

**Columbia Canal Company (CCC):** Chris Cardella, Chair; Randy Houk, 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

**PRESENT:**

Andrew McClure, Minasian, Meith, Soares, Sexton & Cooper LLP; and David Cory, Consultant

The following participated via Conference Call:

Kimberly Brown, CCC Director; Jarrett Martin, CCID Manager; Manny Amorelli, James Irrigation District; Rick Iger, Provost & Pritchard; Lauren Layne, Baker, Manock & Jensen, Audry Arnao, WestWater Research, LLC; Mitch Partovi, The Water Agency, Inc.; John Hancock Representative; and, Thomas Berliner, Duane Morris LLP

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Chris Cardella opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The unapproved minutes from the October 7, 2022 Board meeting, and the minutes of the Special Board meetings of October 13, 2022 and October 25, 2022 were presented.

Director Stearns made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Fontana, and unanimously carried.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

There was no public participation presented.

**BOARD TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 2022 EXPENDITURES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT:**

Joann White presented the October 2022 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 Fontana and seconded by Director Stearns to approve the Expenditure List and Financial Report as presented. The motion was unanimously carried.

The approved Finance Committee meeting minutes October 4, 2022 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: 1,306 cubic feet per second (c.f.s.), of that, 911 c.f.s. from the Mendota Pool and 395 c.f.s from the Delta Mendota Canal (DMC). He then reported that releases from Friant Dam into the San Joaquin River are 540 c.f.s., with 271 c.f.s. at Gravelly Ford. Currently, there is 150 c.f.s. entering the Mendota Pool from the San Joaquin River, with 135 c.f.s. going past Sack Dam as part of the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) flows.

Mr. Hoffman next reported on the following current reservoir storage: Shasta – 1,411,348 acre-feet (AF); San Luis Reservoir – 499,335 AF, adding that the Federal share in the San Luis Reservoir is 187,000 AF, with the State project water at 312,335 AF. Subsequently, he stated that Millerton's current storage is 323,752 AF and the Los Banos Creek Detention Dam is at 17,453 AF. The Upper San Joaquin Basin combined storage is 178,548 AF, which is about 63% of average, and the accumulated full natural flow into Shasta Lake is 56% of average.

The Delta Operation's data was then provided as follows: inflows are 9,491 c.f.s., with exports at 1,562 c.f.s. The outflow index is 6,229 c.f.s., noting the controlling factor for these flows. In conclusion, Mr. Hoffman referred to 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:**

The Executive Director stated that we had recently received a letter from the United States Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) requesting renegotiations of the Exchange Contract under its Article 13 provisions. We are currently in conversation with Reclamation to further understand their positions and will continue to have an open dialogue.

Executive Director White also discussed the recent ruling on the Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir (DPCR) CEQA litigation, in which all the elements of the CEQA environmental challenge survived except for the road realignment which will need to be looked at more carefully.

**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* – Jacobs Engineering provided the final set of 60% design drawings to Reclamation on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. We will be in a holding pattern until around February 2023 while Reclamation gets caught up on the projects and the combined package can move forward together.
- *Sack Dam, Fish Passage and Arroyo Canal Fish Screen* – No updates at this time.
- *Reach 2B Levees* – Currently at 30% design, anticipating 60% design in 2023 and construction to begin in 2024.

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

The Director of Policy and Programs provided an update on the following WRP projects:

- *Orestimba Creek* – The water rights applications were revised and the consultation with California Department Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) are no longer holding up the resubmittals. The permanent application was resubmitted on October 21<sup>st</sup>. The 5-year application will be sent out in early November. We plan to receive an executed long-term license agreement from Department of Water Resources (DWR) by mid-November and an initial draft of a long-term license agreement with Reclamation by late November. Design is 90% complete and anticipate starting construction in February 2023. Del Puerto Water District (DPWD) is leading the effort in applying for federal funding through the Infrastructure Act with the feasibility report being submitted on October 31<sup>st</sup>, if accepted the review process takes 180 days.
- *Los Banos Creek Project* – The narrative to the operation’s report has been received, the cultural studies and NEPA/CEQA are moving forward and anticipating construction to begin late Fall of 2023.

**Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir (DPCR) Project:** Executive Director White reported that work continues on the geotechnical activities including logging of test pits and drafting boring logs, adding that a site visit was held with the Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD) to observe drilling operations and excavated trenches at one of the Saddle Dam sites. He then stated that specimens from the sonic borings were selected for laboratory testing, and a second Technical Review Board meeting was held at the end of October to review work completed and coordinate ideas, concerns or considerations in moving forward with the project. Concluding, Mr. White stated that the project partners continue to support Reclamation in developing their NEPA document.

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

Consultant, David Cory gave the following update:

- *Groundwater Protection Formulas, Values and Targets* – Coalitions submitted to the RWQCB Groundwater Protection (GWP) Targets for each high vulnerability township within the Central Valley in July. After receiving feedback from the RWQCB staff and reviewing comments from environmental justice community, the coalitions have decided to revise their submittal to respond to various concerns with the initial report. GWP Targets will be developed for additional townships and terminology will be changed to avoid unnecessary confusion. The coalitions intend to submit the revised report in November.

**LEGISLATIVE REPORT:**

**State:** The Executive Director referred to Dominic DiMare’s report noting the continued efforts at outreach and education through recent meetings and tours.

**Federal:** The Executive Director presented Nancy Williams’ report noting the FY23 Appropriations and the Department of Interior/Reclamation funding for California water storage projects.

**ATTORNEY’S REPORT:**

Legal Counsel reviewed the following issues and said that further discussions will take place in Closed Session:

- SGMA Litigation
- DPCR Litigation
- Friant Litigation
- Depart of Interior Notice of Intent Regarding Reoperation of the Colorado River

**FOUR ENTITIES’ MANAGER REPORTS:**

**Columbia Canal Company:** Manager Houk reported that CCC is currently reviewing next year’s budget. There will be no new major projects due to increased costs of supplies, etc. and in a holding pattern for coming year. Irrigation should be finished around November 15<sup>th</sup> for the year.

**Firebaugh Canal Water District:** Manager Bryant stated they finished up an average critical year October for water delivery and will continue with water operations through Christmas. The solar project contract and the canal lining project were awarded this past month. They are hoping to get into the new office within the next 30 days.

**San Luis Canal Company (SLCC):** Manager Wiersma reported water deliveries was above average for October. Canals will be dewatered and out of service by Thanksgiving to get ready for winter construction on capital projects. Staff has been reaching out to growers with information related to next year’s operations.

**Central California Irrigation District:** Manager Martin stated they had above average deliveries for October. Staff is working on next year’s budget process. The three (3) long-crested weirs are currently CCID’s top priority and getting them completed this Winter.

**DECEMBER BOARD MEETING:**

Due to the ACWA conference, staff recommended to move the December Board meeting to Friday, December 9, 2022. It was confirmed by the Board.

**INFORMATIONAL:**

**Upcoming Events/Meetings:**

- ACWA Fall Conference – November 29 - December 1

**CLOSED SESSION:**

Chair Cardella asked if there was any public input and hearing none, he adjourned the meeting to Closed Session and called for a short recess at 9:45 a.m. The meeting was reconvened to Closed Session at 9:52 a.m.

Chair Cardella returned the meeting to Open Session at 10:58 p.m. and announced that direction was given to staff and legal counsel. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:59 p.m.

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CHRIS CARDELLA, DIRECTOR

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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ERIC FONTANA, DIRECTOR

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MIKE STEARNS, VICE-CHAIR

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CANNON MICHAEL, ALTERNATE DIRECTOR