

**MINUTES
OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SAN JOAQUIN RIVER EXCHANGE CONTRACTORS WATER AUTHORITY
HELD WEDNESDAY, JULY 1, 2026**

The Board of Directors of the *San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority (SJRECWA)* met in Regular Session on Wednesday, July 1, 2026 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; Jarrett Martin, General Manager (via teleconference)

San Luis Canal Company (SLCC): Douglas Goodman, Alternate Director; John Wiersma, General Manager

Firebaugh Canal Water District (FCWD): Mike Stearns, Vice-Chair; Jeff Bryant, General Manager

Columbia Canal Company (CCC): Chris Cardella, Chair; Mike Gardner, General 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 Marisol Bonilla, Administrative Assistant

PRESENT:

Andrew McClure, Minasian Law; Manny Amorelli, James Irrigation District; and David Cory, Consultant

The following participated via Conference Call:

Kimberly Brown, CCC Director; and Rick Iger, Provost & Pritchard

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Chris Cardella called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and asked Manager Gardner to lead the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

REVIEW OF AGENDA:

There were no proposed changes to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The unapproved minutes of the June 5, 2026 Regular Board meeting were presented. A motion was made by Vice-Chair Stearns to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Fontana and unanimously carried.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Introductions were provided by those present in person and by phone.

BOARD TO APPROVE THE JUNE 2026 EXPENDITURES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT:

Marisol Bonilla provided a summary of the June 2026 Expenditure List and Financial Report.

A motion was made by Director Fontana and seconded by Alternate Director Goodman to approve the Expenditure List and Financial Report as presented. The motion was unanimously carried.

WATER REPORT:

The Water Resources Specialist reported that there was no change to the South-of-Delta allocation in June, which remains at 25%. Exchange Contractors' demands are approximately 2,200 cubic feet per second (cfs) and the San Joaquin River releases have begun to decline as the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) has reduced its target flow from 70 cfs to 25 cfs for July and August.

Mr. Hoffman also provided an update on current reservoir storage levels with Shasta Reservoir currently at 3,636,707 Acre Feet (AF), San Luis Reservoir at 1,249,176 AF, and Millerton Reservoir at 467,240 AF.

Jones Pumping Plant operations were temporarily reduced from three pumps to one, while the State Water Project (SWP) also reduced pumping substantially. The SWP is expected to increase pumping significantly in the coming days as part of its operational plan. July pumping at Jones is expected to remain below average and increase to five pumping units in August.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Executive Director White provided a brief report noting Dr. Andrea Travnicek, Assistant Secretary of Water and Science at the Department of the Interior, toured the SJRRP Sack Dam construction project, and the Los Banos Creek Reservoir Project. The following week, Mr. White traveled to Washington, D.C. with members of the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority to meet with Interior officials, including the new Acting Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation Aubrey Bettencourt.

Mr. White reported the SJRRP is progressing, with significant construction underway.

John Wiersma provided an update on Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) activities, noting various meetings with neighboring Groundwater Sustainability Agencies and the California Department of Water Resources (DWR).

Executive Director reported Phase 1 of the Los Banos Creek Detention Dam operations project is complete and they continue progress toward Phase 2. Ongoing efforts continue with the project partners and San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority (SLDMWA) in obtaining federal Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds to allow construction activities to move forward on the project.

Mr. White provided an update on the Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir Project, including responses to environmental review comments.

In conclusion, the Executive Director reminded the Board about the upcoming Agricultural Leadership Tour scheduled for August 20th and 21st.

DIRECTOR OF POLICY & PROGRAMS REPORT:

The Director of Policy & Programs recapped his monthly report which included status on the Mendota Pool Fish Screen & Control Structure, Reclamation Compact Bypass Facility, Fish Ladder, and Financial Assistance Agreement (FAA).

Mr. Chedester reported that the Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley has revised its bylaws to expand the number of members and that the Unified Water Plan is nearing completion, with final publication expected by the end of July.

WATER RESOURCES PLAN (WRP) – UPDATE:

Mr. Chedester informed the Board that the Orestimba Creek Recharge and Recovery Project continues to work securing well recovery permits and well locations.

Next, he provided an update on the Los Banos Creek Reservoir Project noting the completion of the pipeline to San Luis Water District has been delayed; rehabilitation work on the San Luis Water District Lift Stations 8 and 9 is nearly complete; and air vents have already been installed and tested. The project is also continuing to address Golden Mussel concerns, and the State Parks expressed concerns over construction delays, which have prevented public access to the park.

Finally, the Los Banos Creek Recharge and Recovery Project partners continue to focus on obtaining approval to split the grant funds received, with all requested information being submitted to the funding agency.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM:

Executive Director White recommended approval of 2% of revenue totaling \$1,040,000 from the Conservation Water Transfer Program funds. A motion was made by Vice-Chair Stearns and seconded by Alternate Director Goodman to approve the recommendation as presented. The motion was unanimously carried.

Executive Director White next explained the two separate projects the City of Firebaugh has been approved for under the 2024 and 2025 Community Infrastructure Program. He stated that the City received bids for the two projects, however, one of the bids came in over the grant amount and the second project bid was below the amount granted with the total of the two projects less than the combined grant funds. Therefore, he is recommending approval to combine the City of Firebaugh's 2024 and 2025 grant funds to complete the two projects not to exceed the bid amounts submitted.

A motion was made by Vice-Chair Stearns and seconded by Director Fontana to approve the recommendation as presented. The motion was unanimously carried.

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

David Cory reported that the Regional Board adopted the Modesto Management Zone Resolution Order. This order serves as the template for all Priority 1 Management Zones and will provide the framework for Priority 2 areas. The Regional Board is expected to begin implementing the program in other Priority 1 areas early next year.

Mr. Cory also discussed recent developments related to nitrate management. The Agricultural Expert Panel finalized its nitrate report and presented it to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The SWRCB plans to hold a workshop with the Regional Boards early next year to determine how the report's recommendations will be incorporated into the different Irrigated Land Regulatory programs across the state.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT:

State: Executive Director reviewed Arc Strategies' report included in the Board packet providing status updates on proposed legislative bills being monitored by the Exchange Contractors.

Federal: Executive Director referred to the report included in the Board packet.

PUBLIC OUTREACH:

Reference was made to the updated report from Lighthouse Public Affairs included in the meeting packet.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT:

Attorney Andrew McClure provided an update on the Johnson v. PG&E case with the appeal deadline date of July 6th.

Mr. McClure explained that because of the judge's decision on the one issue of downstream terrestrial impacts, the Draft Environmental Impact Report was revised and recirculated for the Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir Project. The public comment period has been closed for more than 45 days; however, a new comment letter was received on June 19th from the Center for Biological Diversity. They are currently working through the responses to the comments and expect to have board action on the revised EIR by Del Puerto Water District completed in August or September.

FOUR ENTITIES' MANAGER REPORTS:

Columbia Canal Company: Manager Gardner reported that water deliveries were at 175 cfs with average June deliveries totaling approximately 6,200 AF. Operations remained routine with seasonal maintenance activities such as mowing, spraying weeds, and treating canal pondweed.

Firebaugh Canal Water District: Manager Bryant reported that June water deliveries were also average, although the district experienced a temporary issue when a transformer failed. The problem was resolved without interrupting water deliveries to any growers.

San Luis Canal Company: Manager Wiersma reported standard maintenance operations continue throughout the Company's service area.

Central California Irrigation District: Manager Martin reported routine water deliveries and standard seasonal maintenance. Focusing on weed growth in the canals, which is typical for this time of year.

INFORMATIONAL:

Executive Director White recapped The California Ag Leadership tour scheduled for August 20th and 21st and reminded the Board of the upcoming C.A.S.T. event scheduled for September 12th.

No further business came to the Board, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:55a.m.

CLOSED SESSION:

After a brief recess, the meeting was adjourned to Closed Session at 10:01 a.m.

The Chair returned the meeting to Open Session at 10:13 a.m. and announced that direction was given to staff and legal counsel.

No further business came before the Board; the meeting was adjourned at 10:14 a.m.

CHRIS CARDELLA, CHAIR

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

CHRIS WHITE, SECRETARY

ERIC FONTANA, DIRECTOR

DOUGLAS GOODMAN, ALTERNATE DIRECTOR

MIKE STEARNS, VICE-CHAIR