

**MINUTES
OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SAN JOAQUIN RIVER EXCHANGE CONTRACTORS WATER AUTHORITY
HELD FRIDAY, AUGUST 7, 2026**

The Board of Directors of the *San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority (SJRECWA)* met in Regular Session on Friday, August 7, 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 (arrived 9:03 a.m.); Jarrett Martin, Alternate Director/General Manager

San Luis Canal Company (SLCC): Cannon Michael, Director

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; Lauren Layne, Baker, Manock & Jensen; Rick Iger, Provost & Pritchard; Shane Swartz, Lower San Joaquin Levee District; and Don Wright, Journalist

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Chris Cardella called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and asked Manager Martin 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 July 1, 2026 Regular Board meeting were presented. A motion was made by Alternate Director Martin to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Stearns and unanimously carried.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

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

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

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

A motion was made by Director Michael and seconded by Vice-Chair Stearns to approve the Expenditure List and Financial Report as presented. The motion was unanimously carried.

WATER REPORT:

The Water Resource Specialist reported CVP allocations remain the same, and the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) flow release remains at 35 cubic feet per second (cfs) and will continue through this month with an increase to 45 cfs to begin in September.

Mr. Hoffman also provided an update on current reservoir storage levels with Shasta Reservoir currently at 2,991,327 Acre Feet (AF), San Luis Reservoir at 1,155,523 AF, and Millerton Reservoir at 276,626 AF.

Jones Pumping Plant increased to five units and is expected to continue operating at five units throughout August.

Mr. Hoffman reported the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is forecasting a strong El Niño this year. The current El Niño conditions may influence weather patterns which has been historically associated with wetter conditions across the southern United States.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Executive Director White provided a brief report on the SJRRP noting that Senator Padilla's bill has passed the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and it will next need to move to the Senate floor and then through the House.

Mr. White informed based on current reservoir conditions, there is a possibility of an allocation increase of just under 5% for South of the Delta CVP Contractors.

Manager Martin provided an update on Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) activities and noted that recent meetings with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) have been productive. Comments on the Groundwater Sustainability Plan are due August 14th, after which the team will wait for DWR's review and any comments or recommendations.

Mr. White also discussed the City of Los Banos' current challenges related to the new chromium-6 drinking water standard and have reached out to the Exchange Contractors to explore potential alternatives to not rely solely on groundwater, including developing surface-water treatment options. Upon asking the Board for their support to move forward in working with the City on this matter, the Executive Director was given authorization. Mr. White also mentioned that at the city's request, they have also met to revisit the Milliken Museum-Authority Office project.

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). The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has indicated that it may issue a Request for Information (RFI) regarding the Phase 1B project.

WATER RESOURCES PLAN (WRP) – UPDATE:

Manager Martin reported that the second well located on Orestimba Creek Recharge and Recovery was tested and has very good test pumping and production.

Mr. Chedester recapped Los Banos Creek project activities noting adding guard rails and repavement of the road with completion by mid-September. Concluding, Mr. Chedester reported on the various studies and tests involving elimination of Golden Mussels.

Mr. White reported that the Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir project team continues to address the comments and prepare the draft responses. Once finalized, the responses will be sent to Reclamation's Acting Regional Director for his review., with the final review and approval to be completed by the Department of Interior solicitor's office.

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

David Cory reported that the Central Valley Regional Board adopted the Modesto Management Zone Order under the Nitrate Control Program. The order has been appealed by environmental justice organizations, and the State Water Resources Control Board has until October 1st to decide whether it will grant review of the petition.

Regarding the Management Zone Implementation Plan(MZIP), the Valley Water Collaborative is drafting the Delta Mendota Basin MZIP with submittal by January, 2027. MZIP. The document will establish the regulatory requirements for all participants in the Management Zone.

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY DRAINAGE AUTHORITY:

Executive Director White explained that Manager Wiersma is currently alternate to the San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority and is recommending to appoint Steve Chedester as the new alternate since he has been attending the meetings each month.

A motion was made by Director Michael and seconded by Director Fontana to appoint Steve Chedester as the alternate to the San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority Board. The motion was unanimously carried.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT:

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

Federal: Executive Director referred to the Invariant report included in the Board packet, noting updates on federal activities and congressional developments.

PUBLIC OUTREACH:

Executive Director reported the Lighthouse Public Affairs has been assisting with the Community Infrastructure Fund application process, in addition to their continued work on Exchange Contractors' public relations activities.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT:

Attorney Andrew McClure said that there was no appeal filed on the Johnson v. PG&E, et al.; therefore, concluding the case..

Mr. McClure provided an update regarding Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir's project CEQA process regarding the Partially Recirculated Draft EIR (PRDEIR), stating it is anticipated the final PRDEIR will be published on August 7th, with the Del Puerto Water District Board of Directors to take action on the matter at their August board meeting. Once approved, it will initiate a 30-day limitation period for any legal challenges to the PRDEIR.

FOUR ENTITIES' MANAGER REPORT:

Columbia Canal Company: Manager Gardner reported that water deliveries were at 98 cfs with average July deliveries totaling approximately 7,200 AF. Continuing normal activities for this time of the year.

Firebaugh Canal Water District: Manager Bryant reported that August water deliveries are expected to rise and mentioned that they are dealing with a significant amount of theft and vandalism in the area. They are working on preparing a construction schedule for the upcoming winter, and there was an electrical outage recently prompting the board to approve rehabilitation of the electrical systems located at three pumping stations.

San Luis Canal Company: Director Michael reported July water deliveries were slightly below average with approximately 23,000 AF delivered. Sack Dam deliveries have also declined, and they are also, working on preparing a schedule for the upcoming winter projects.

Central California Irrigation District: Manager Martin reported July water deliveries were light, with harvest season beginning earlier than usual. CCID is also preparing for upcoming maintenance and major construction projects, and a new accounting software system is being implemented this month.

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, the meeting was adjourned to Closed Session at 9:44 a.m.

CLOSED SESSION:

After a brief recess, the meeting was reconvened to Closed Session at 9:50 a.m.

The Chair returned the meeting to Open Session at 10:02 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 10:02 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

(Signatures Continue on Following Page)

ERIC FONTANA, DIRECTOR

CANNON MICHAEL, DIRECTOR

MIKE STEARNS, VICE-CHAIR