

Chair Bigley called the meeting of the RWA Federal Affairs Standing Committee to order at 11:00 a.m. as a teleconference meeting.

1. Roll Call

Individuals in attendance are listed below:

Committee Members in Attendance:

Jeni Buckman, Bartkiewicz, Kronick & Shanahan, Legal Counsel
Cathy Lee, Carmichael Water District
Marcus Yasutake, City of Folsom
Sean Bigley, Chair, City of Roseville
Anne Sanger, Vice Chair, City of Sacramento
Greg Zlotnick, San Juan Water District
Dan York, Sacramento Suburban Water District

Committee Members Not in Attendance:

Dave Underwood, Robert Dugan and Evan Jacobs

Others in Attendance:

Tony Firenzi, William Roberts, Ryan Ojakian, Christine Kohn, Eric Sapirstein, Kristi More, Brian Sanders, Noelle Mattock, Jim Peifer and Cecilia Partridge

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Approval of previous meeting minutes

Minutes from the July 15, 2020 RWA Federal Affairs Standing Committee meetings

Motion/Second/Carried (M/S/C) Mr. Zlotnick moved, with a second by Mr. York, to approve the July 15, 2020 RWA Federal Affairs Standing Committee meetings. The motion carried by the unanimous voice vote of all committee members present.

4. Disclosures and regional coordination

Mr. Bigley gave an opportunity for agencies to disclose any activities they are working on giving them an opportunity to coordinate on a regional basis.

There was an update and discussion on the federal stimulus funding and communicating with members to keep them up to date on this issue on a regular basis. The Federal Affairs Committee is strictly voluntary which means there is a limit to the extent of personal time that committee members can spend writing and providing updates. The committee is committed to working with the RWA for further discussion on how the board wants to handle this in the long term. It was suggested that the RWA Newsletter be produced monthly with a federal corner that would provide updates for RWA members and other interested parties. There was consensus from the committee that this was a favorable idea. Updates can also be provided on a regular basis at the monthly RWA Executive Committee meetings.

5. Legislative and policy review/discussion

- a. Review of RWA Federal Legislative Tracker; consideration of priority bills
 - i. Discussion of side-by-side of various water bills; what should RWA focus on from a policy standpoint.
 - ii. Update and status of WIIN Act project recommendations and the federal budget process.
 - iii. The Snow Water Supply Forecasting Program Authorization Act
- b. Call for federal bills for next RWA Federal Affairs Standing Committee

M/S/C Mr. Yasutake moved, with a second by Mr. Zlotnick, to recommend that the Executive Director offer a recommendation to the Executive Committee to give the Executive Director the authority to initiate a support letter for the Snow Water Survey bill. The motion carried by the unanimous voice vote of all committee members present.

There was review and discussion of the RWA Federal Affairs Legislative Tracker and consideration of priority bills. Ms. More gave information on the process and format of the legislative tracker and how to potentially organize it to meet the needs of members. Organization of the way the tracker presents the bills was discussed. Bills that are supported by RWA, bills of interest to RWA and bills that are being watched are included on the tracker. Bills are incorporated as they become active. Ms. More gave a brief overview of current bills and the infrastructure package noting at this time there are no bills that are opposed.

Mr. Peifer said that our primary purpose is for members of the committee to make sure RWA members are receiving the information they need and that

their interests are addressed. A second purpose is for RWA members to be able to provide the legislative report information to others in their agency and their boards.

There was discussion on activity with project recommendations and the federal budget. There were several RWA letters sent to our delegation related to funding for the groundwater bank and support for releasing funds as quickly as possible. The funds have not been released that were awarded by the Bureau of Reclamation. It was suggested that additional letters be sent and possibly conference calls with our delegation stating why it is critical for the money to be released as soon as possible.

The water infrastructure bill H.R. 1497 was discussed. The Senate committee staff is interested in expanding the commitment to fund water technology advancement because of resiliency. The use of technology for leak detection that we can incorporate into the distribution systems will allow to identify leaks and deal with them more efficiently.

6. Initial discussion on possible leadership transitions in Congress and White House

- a. Considerations
- b. Next Steps

There was discussion on possible regional preparations relative to the potential for leadership transition post-election in Congress and the White House. It is expected that we will continue in some type of COVID-19 shutdown so everything will be done online after the election. We need to be ready with a strategy to communicate our message to our delegation about what we would like them to do.

We want to be mindful of how helpful the current administration has been. Are there things that our region and RWA needs to be thinking about to educate our delegation on our needs and securing continued support from reclamation. Preparation for the future transition means organizing RWA in a way to be able to respond quickly when the transition occurs.

This item will be kept on future Federal Affairs Committee meeting agendas.

7. COVID-19 pandemic and economic impacts

- a. Outlook on Federal recovery efforts
 - i. Updates
 - ii. Next check-in with Congressional staff/members
- b. Other Items
 - i. Local elected official education, engagement and support – next steps

- ii. Interim actions between meetings, how to handle
- iii. Participation in future efforts by committee members
- iv. Reporting

Mr. Bigley reminded the committee of the discussion at the last meeting to begin looking towards educating our local elected officials and engaging them with respect to our infrastructure and the package that was put together. The tasks have to do with the size and scope of the infrastructure list that has been put together and how to prioritize the projects in the package. We need to keep it transparent and objective in terms of undertaking. The three project criteria are readiness, the level of stimulus rendered based on the project and benefits. It was suggested that a couple of agency engineers meet to determine project readiness based on readiness criteria that we lay out that benefits the projects provided. Placer County Water Agency and Sacramento Suburban Water District volunteered engineers to meet to do an initial screening and bring a recommendation back to the committee what a reasonable package looks like.

We are going through an exercise to figure out how we can tie local influencers to decision makers on the state and federal level. It was recommended going through a power mapping exercise to understand where those linages are and finding opportunities where we can leverage our local relationships to help ultimately fund decisions when the time comes.

Mr. Bigley said that the committee is going through a learning process adjusting as we go to make the committee process better. His commitment is to make sure that opportunities are provided for the committee to be engaged and help guide specific strategies and decisions. When situations arise where we need to make strategy calls a recommendation would be to structure a committee of three of the committee members to make those calls and provide guidance. If there are substantial decisions to be made a special meeting would be called.

Ms. More and Mr. Sapirstein have been providing support to the RWA Federal Affairs Committee. The committee needs to look at a way that we can provide an ability for them to deal with any reporting requirements that they need to do. As they put the RWA Federal Affairs tracker together that is justification, and it is appropriate, for some type of compensation that allows them to report the activity to RWA as a client to make sure we are following all applicable laws.

8. Action Items

There are a couple of items that we will carry forward on the September agenda.

9. Public comment

None.

10. Adjournment

Chair Bigley adjourned the meeting at 12:29 p.m.

By:

Chairperson

Attest:
