

Vice Chair Sanger called the meeting of the RWA Federal Affairs Standing Committee to order at 11:07 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
Evan Jacobs, California-American Water
Cathy Lee, Carmichael Water District
Marcus Yasutake, City of Folsom
Anne Sanger, Vice Chair, City of Sacramento
Robert Dugan, Placer County Water Agency
Greg Zlotnick, San Juan Water District
Dan York, Sacramento Suburban Water District

Committee Members Not in Attendance:

Sean Bigley and Dave Underwood

Others in Attendance:

Tony Firenzi, Ryan Ojakian, Eric Sapirstein, Kristi More, Brian Sanders, Noelle Mattock, Andy Fecko, Ross Branch, Maurice Chaney, Robert Williams, Jim Davenport, David French, Greg Burns, Christine Kohn, Jim Peifer and Cecilia Partridge

2. Public Comment

It was requested that notices for the Federal Affairs Committee meetings be sent out as invites to link to participant calendars.

Vice Chair Sanger opened the meeting for anyone who had anything that they would like to share with the Federal Affairs Committee.

Mr. Peifer said that today there is a special board meeting scheduled for the Water Bank program committee. Anyone interested in the topic is invited to join the meeting at 2:00 p.m. The link is posted on the RWA website at www.RWAh2o.org under upcoming meetings. There will be RWA Board members and general managers participating which necessitates posting the meeting as a Special Meeting in accordance with the Brown Act.

3. Approval of previous meeting minutes

Minutes from the August 19, 2020 RWA Federal Affairs Standing Committee Meeting

Motion/Second/Carried (M/S/C) Mr. Jacobs moved, with a second by Mr. Yasutake, to approve the August 19, 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

Vice Chair Sanger gave an opportunity for agencies to disclose any activities they are working on.

5. Legislative and policy review/discussion

- a. Review of RWA Federal Legislative Tracker; consideration of priority bills
- b. Bill Positions
- c. Call for federal bills for next RWA Federal Affairs Standing Committee

Ms. More gave an update on the tracker and the capability to customize the tracker to provide additional information. The tracker will highlight the bills and group the issue areas together, the agencies that are the main component of the bills and monitor support or not support positions. It was suggested that bills be categorized by water resources, drinking water, budget preparation and natural resources or group them by agency. It is important for the tracker to be usable for the water agencies when they talk to their individual boards.

Mr. Peifer suggested that ideas on organization of the information on the tracker be sent to him. He will consolidate the information to provide to the Federal Affairs Committee.

Mr. French gave an update on the wildfires that we are dealing with in California and throughout the West. The Emergency Wildfire and Public Safety Act bill will be addressed in the Senate Committee today. The bill provides needed assistance to address forest health issues but does have a controversial element which deals with litigation and consultation on Section seven under the ESA. Support for this measure includes the National Water Resources Association. ACWA does not have a position on this measure at this time but they have been engaged on the national level with the National Association of Counties. Mr. French highlighted the opposition with the forest management measures, the preference to focus on community protection and the impact in the water community watersheds, water facilities and utility infrastructure.

There was discussion on the RWA interest in making forest health a priority because it is the source of our water. Watershed protection is recognized nationwide with federal funding options being investigated. It was suggested that a letter of support be initiated by RWA.

Mr. Peifer said that the Executive Committee meeting next week has been canceled so when the Federal Affairs Committee identifies what position they need to take it will be taken to the next Executive Committee meeting for approval. Once endorsed the Executive Director, along with RWA counsel, will initiate a letter that is consistent with RWA policy and principles and the federal platform. Legal counsel confirmed the process outlined is acceptable.

M/S/C Mr. Zlotnick moved, with a second by Mr. Jacobs, to send a letter of support consistent with RWA policy principles. The motion carried by the unanimous voice vote of all committee members present.

Bill Positions

S 4431 (Wildfire) – Support (also House companion HR 7978)
HR 8217 (WIFIA) – Support

ASO bill will receive RWA letter of support this week. ASO bill may get wrapped into WRDA but won't happen until lame duck.

Information on the 2019 RWA Federal Platform will be added to the October Federal Affairs meeting agenda. The Federal Affairs standing committee can make modifications or improvements to the Federal Affairs Platform to send to the Executive Director for presentation at the December Executive Committee meeting. Any modification will then be adopted and recommended to the full Board for consideration and adoption in January.

Mr. Peifer mentioned that each year RWA participates in the Cap-to-Cap Conference in Washington, D.C. This year the conference has been interrupted and it is not certain when the conference will resume. The conference speaks to the needs of our region with respect to federal affairs. We want to continue connecting with our local elected officials because we want them to be our advocates.

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

Vice Chair Sanger said that there have been discussions in our past meetings regarding the potential changes in leadership in Washington, both in Congress and the administration. We are preparing as much as possible to connect with new offices and new staff. As an association we need to be ready with our ability to educate new faces in the administration and congress as soon as we have the opportunity. Whoever sits at the Interior

Department will be busy promoting resiliency and alternative water supply projects to the Bureau. From an EPA standpoint we could play a significant role. The latter part of the year will be spent identifying which offices, staff and representatives we would like to make contact with. Senator Udall is retiring so he may be considered for Secretary of Interior. Radika Fox, CEO of US Water Alliance, could be considered for head of EPA's Office of Water.

7. Outlook on Federal recovery efforts

There is a potential economic recovery bill to be passed by Congress. Whatever is done on a relief package may not happen until after the election.

8. Updates on Congressional Office Visits

Vice Chair Sanger gave updates on congressional office visits that have been completed for now. We had virtual visits with Congressman and Senators. We will revisit and schedule additional visits after more is known about the outcome of the election.

9. Action items

An action was taken on supporting Senate Bill 4431 and House Bill 7978 for Emergency Wildfire and Public Safety

An action item was presented for the Executive Director to write a letter of support on House Bill 8217 to Amend the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovative Act.

Next meeting will be Wednesday, October 21.

10. Adjournment

Vice Chair Sanger adjourned the meeting at 12:12 p.m.

By:

Chairperson

Attest:
