

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, City of Roseville  
Anne Sanger, Vice Chair, City of Sacramento  
Greg Zlotnick, San Juan Water District  
Dan York, Sacramento Suburban Water District  
Evan Jacobs, California American Water

### **Committee Members Not in Attendance:**

Dave Underwood and Robert Dugan

### **Others in Attendance:**

Ryan Ojakian, Eric Sapirstein, Kristi More, Brian Sanders, Noelle Mattock, Andy Fecko, Ross Branch, Jim Davenport, Christine Kohn, Jim Peifer, Rob Swartz and Cecilia Partridge

## 2. Public Comment

Chair Bigley opened the meeting for anyone who had anything that they would like to share with the Federal Affairs Committee. There were no comments.

## 3. Approval of previous meeting minutes

Minutes from the September 16, 2020 RWA Federal Affairs Standing Committee Meeting

Motion/Second/Carried (M/S/C) Mr. Zlotnick moved, with a second by Mr. Yasutake, to approve the September 16, 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**

Chair Bigley offered an opportunity for committee members who want to present disclosures or ideas related to items that we should coordinate on from a regional basis.

#### **5. General Federal Update**

Mr. Sapirstein reported that Congress is currently out of session. There have been exemptions discussed that relate to COVID impacts for businesses and federal assistance for cities, counties and states. There has been discussion about the interplay between wildfire legislation and water resources from an infrastructure, water resource management and watershed perspectives. There might be emergency supplemental disaster aid but any type of funding package is not expected until after the election. RWA FAC has indicated support for wildfire legislation by Senator Feinstein, we will send a letter of support and hope that the bill comes up during the lame duck session even if it is a long shot to get passed.

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.

#### **6. Discussion of Proposed 2021 RWA Federal Affairs Platform**

Mr. Peifer said that the updated 2021 Federal Affairs Platform will be presented to the Executive Committee at the December 9, 2020 meeting. It will be presented to the RWA Board at the January 2021 meeting.

Chair Bigley suggested a subgroup of committee members meet to discuss the Federal Affairs Platform and bring back any recommendations or changes to the November Federal Affairs Committee meeting. Mr. Zlotnick, Ms. Sanger, Mr. Firenzi and Chair Bigley will form the subgroup committee to review the document to identify what needs to be done in the short term and long term. Mr. Peifer and Mr. Ojakian will participate on the subgroup committee.

Mr. Ojakian suggested that the final Federal Affairs Platform be reviewed by Ms. Moore and Mr. Sapirstein.

Mr. Peifer said that congratulatory letters should be sent to members of Congress and their staff attaching the Federal Affairs Platform. It was suggested that the Legislative Platform document be designed with the RWA logo.

## **7. Water Policy and Legislative Review**

- a) Review Federal legislative Tracker; consider priority bills, committee recommendations
- b) Update state of WIIN Act Funding and FY21 appropriations process
- c) Call for federal bills for next RWA Federal Affairs Standing Committee

Chair Bigley noted that the Legislative Tracker is posted on the RWA website with the Federal Affairs meeting packet. Ms. More has been grouping bills and bill information on the tracker for easy access. There are labels for different categories including snow, water supply and forecasting. There are possibilities for different options to separate and categorize information on the tracker including indicating categories for support, oppose or watch and a new bill category. The process will identify something for each bill as it is introduced. The tracker was begun when much of the legislation had already been introduced. Most of the legislation will carry over or need to be reintroduced into the next Congress.

It was suggested that letters that are sent be included on the tracker so that when you click on an item it will direct you to the corresponding letter or item.

Mr. Fecko provided information on forest management and tracking on associated bills. There have been several conversations with Senator Feinstein's office on development in the watershed and how to access funds and put them to work on federal lands. He said that they are trying to offer solutions to bring state and federal funds together to achieve projects, especially on federal lands and in the wildland urban interface.

There have been conversations with the Senate Committee staff to determine the status on energy and water development appropriations. It appears they are essentially wrapped up on a bipartisan basis for their perspectives and everything is on hold.

Federal bills will be added to the next RWA Federal Affairs Standing Committee meeting agenda to acknowledge where things stand and what will happen with the new federal legislative session.

## **8. Transitions in Congress and White House**

It is difficult to project what the transitions and policy issues regarding water resources will be with a new administration. We will have more direction clarity after the election. It was suggested that the November and December Federal Affairs meetings concentrate on reporting where there are transitions both on the congressional side and the administrative side.

It may be easier to make appointments and talk with people who are newly installed in the administration. It is important to educate them to what we are

about, what we need and to make sure that the MOU we are putting together with Reclamation does not fade away. The RWA profile needs to be raised to connect with these people.

#### **9. COVID-19 Pandemic and Economic Impacts**

Chair Bigley said that basically we are going to look at the current infrastructure list and examine it based on certain screening criteria.

Mr. Ojakian has engaged with some of our consultants to look at a power mapping exercise.

#### **10. Proposed Section 219 Working Group**

Chair Bigley said he wanted to form a working group to explore the possibility for funding through the US Army Corp of Engineers. Our description of projects includes water conservation, recycling and environmental infrastructure with an expanded list to include resiliency and reliability projects. Chair Bigley, Mr. Peifer and Ms. Sanger will discuss this further before the November Federal Affairs meeting.

#### **11. Action Items**

Mr. Peifer introduced an item regarding a potential grant opportunity. Ms. Buckman, legal counsel said that adding this item to the agenda to just give direction to staff is within the Brown Act provisions.

Mr. Ojakian gave information about a grant opportunity. In 2018 a law was passed stating that 60% of bonds are required to go towards pre-disaster mitigation projects. COVID-19 would be characterized as a disaster. Pre-disaster mitigation is now called building resilient infrastructure and community. We may want to do further exploration to pursue funding opportunities. A benefit cost analysis is needed for funding applications to move forward.

It was suggested that a list of activities and projects be assembled for discussion. A nominal payment to TFG and ENS for their services and work that they have done for the committee was discussed.

#### **12. Public Comment**

None

#### **13. Next Meeting November 18, 2020**

**14. Adjournment**

Chair Bigley adjourned the meeting at 12:36 p.m.

By:

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Chairperson

Attest:

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