

Chair Bigley called the meeting of the RWA Federal Affairs Standing Committee to order at 11:30 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  
Sean Bigley, Chair, City of Roseville  
Anne Sanger, Vice Chair, City of Sacramento  
Robert Dugan, Placer County Water Agency  
Dan York, Sacramento Suburban Water District  
Greg Zlotnick, San Juan Water District

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

Marcus Yasutake and Dave Underwood

### **Others in Attendance:**

Ryan Ojakian, Eric Sapirstein, Kristi More, Brian Sanders, William Roberts, Andy Fecko, Tony Firenzi, Ross Branch, Noelle Mattock, Jim Peifer 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 November 18, 2020 RWA Federal Affairs Standing Committee Meeting

Motion/Second/Carried (M/S/C) Mr. Dugan moved, with a second by Mr. York, to approve the November 18, 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 wanted to present disclosures or ideas related to items that should be coordinated on from a regional basis. There were no comments.

#### **5. Status of proposed 2021 RWA Federal Affairs Platform**

Ms. Sanger gave a report on the 2021 RWA Federal Platform and the proposed next steps. The platform gives an overview of the watershed and how to address future challenges. After a presentation to the RWA Executive Committee they recommended approval by the RWA Board in January. The platform effectively communicates our priorities.

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

- a) Review Federal legislative Tracker; consider priority bills, committee recommendations
- b) Call for federal bills for next RWA Federal Affairs Standing Committee
- c) WIIN Act recommendation for Sacramento Regional Groundwater Bank
- d) President-elect Biden appointments; transition activity
- e) Other items

Ms. More reported on the updated Federal Legislative tracker. There are items on the tracker that have formally been introduced. At this time everything is tabled until January due to appropriations and COVID.

Letters to the Committee on Appropriations came out that identified recommendations for the recycled water, reuse projects and the groundwater bank. These recommendations allow the legislation to move forward. The letters are posted on the RWA website. It was suggested that letters be sent to the new administration.

Motion/Second/Carried (M/S/C) Mr. Dugan moved, with a second by Mr. York, to approve giving the Executive Director the authority to follow up for consultation with our lobbyist. The motion carried by the unanimous voice vote of all committee members present.

There was discussion on the possible changes with the new administration. There will be more definite information to provide at the January 2021 Federal Affairs Committee meeting.

#### **7. Update on WRDA and Section 219 Working Group**

There was discussion on the possibilities of the normal annual appropriations process coming back. There is potential to explore our opportunities with the projects ready list that the committee has prepared. There will be new members that the committee will need to educate to understand the process.

The 219 Working Group includes Greg Zlotnick, Anne Sanger, Kristi More, Rob Swartz and Jim Peifer. The group is engaging in developing a project list with basic ideas on where we would look for assistance from the Corp. Agreement on the list of projects is needed before asking for the assistance. Kristi More to set up meetings with USACE HQ and Division offices prior to meeting with District again. Roseville and PCWA have a pipeline project they would like to request be added to the list.

Mr. Peifer commented that there is a funding recommendation that we receive \$870,000 for the Water Bank with a 25% cost share. We would potentially be able to utilize \$300,000 of the funding amount. It is important to decide how to use the money for water bank related projects and utilize the 219 funding to pay for additional things we are interested in doing like the Sacramento Regional Groundwater Bank.

It was suggested that a meeting be scheduled to discuss the different funding opportunities, the planning stages of the water bank, the construction element and implementation parts and identifying a list of multiple projects. The meeting will include Sacramento region participants who have an interest in the groundwater bank.

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

- a) Update on developing a shorter infrastructure list
- b) Update on power-mapping activity
- c) Next steps

Noelle Mattock gave a report on developing an infrastructure list. A project list of about 162 projects has been compiled that could be advanced if federal funding is received for an infrastructure package. Two engineers reviewed the list and broke it down with the most impactful ranked at the top. A companion document explains how the scoring was implemented.

It was agreed to ask Mr. Swartz to review the list to make sure the projects listed can be successful. After he has reviewed the list it will be redistributed to the Federal Affairs Committee for further discussion and finalization at the January meeting. After the list is complete it will be presented to the RWA board. The list will evolve over time as projects are completed.

Mr. Ojakian gave an update on the power mapping activity saying that the process will be reinvigorated in the new year. We have reached out to influencers and will be contacting staff in new positions. There will be more to report at the January Federal Affairs meeting.

Ms. More said that there are state and local packages considering giving aid to state and local governments. There are liability concerns that appear to be keeping Congress from coming to an agreement on an overall package. If a

COVID package is passed state and local aid will continue to be a priority. The California Special Districts Association is developing a framework on behalf of California's Special Districts to present to the Governor with guidance for the Department of Treasury. The intent is to get funding to special districts that are administering COVID relief.

Mr. Peifer said that a member requested a letter be sent to state health authorities that are making recommendations on the priorities of workers. Water agencies employ essential workers who should have priority when determining who should receive the COVID vaccine. The Community Vaccine Advisory Committee is meeting today to develop a phase for deployment of the vaccine. It was agreed that a letter be sent out as soon as possible to the decision makers to emphasize the importance of water sector workers, particularly operations staff as essential workers. Mr. Peifer will include an update in his Executive Director's Report at the January RWA Board meeting.

## **9. Action Items**

Chair Bigley recapped the action items to include giving the Executive Director the ability to move forward on a letter to the administration as well as engage in a discussion with the federal lobbyist as to how WIIN Act funding will be dispersed. The 219 Working Group will be bringing relevant agencies together to discuss projects that tie into the Sacramento Regional Groundwater Bank and are within the 219 Framework. The prioritized infrastructure project list will be distributed for review by the committee prior to the January Federal Affairs meeting.

## **10. Public Comment**

None

## **11. Next Meeting January 20, 2021**

Chair Bigley said that the January Federal Affairs meeting will begin at the usual time of 11:00 a.m.

## **12. Adjournment**

Chair Bigley adjourned the meeting at 12:50 p.m.

By:

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Chairperson

Attest:

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