

Chair Sanger called the meeting of the RWA Federal Affairs Standing Committee to order at 1:30 p.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
Anne Sanger, Chair, City of Sacramento
Tony Firenzi, Vice Chair, Placer County Water Agency
Cathy Lee, Carmichael Water District
Noelle Mattock, City of Roseville
Brian Sanders, City of Sacramento
Forrest Williams, Sacramento County Water Agency
Greg Zlotnick, San Juan Water District

Committee Members Not in Attendance:

Evan Jacobs, California American Water, Sean Bigley, City of Roseville and Robert Dugan, Placer County Water Agency

Others in Attendance:

Ryan Ojakian, Eric Sapirstein, Kristi More, William Roberts, Andy Fecko, Ross Branch, Michelle Carey, Marcus Yasutake, Jessica Law, Jim Peifer, Michelle Banonis and Cecilia Partridge

2. Public Comment

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

Chair Sanger said that the meeting agendas and legislative tracker are posted on the RWA website on the new dedicated Federal Affairs Committee page.

3. Approval of previous meeting minutes

Ms. Partridge noted that the February 17, 2021 minutes will be corrected to reflect that Brian Sanders had also abstained from voting on the minutes.

Minutes from the February 17, 2021 RWA Federal Affairs Standing Committee Meeting

Motion/Second/Carried (M/S/C) Mr. Zlotnick moved, with a second by Mr. Sanders, to approve the February 17, 2021 RWA Federal Affairs Standing Committee meetings. The motion carried by the unanimous voice vote of the committee members present.

4. Disclosures and Regional Coordination

Chair Sanger 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.

Chair Sanger reported that items from the last meeting have been completed including the letter of support for HR 1015, Michelle Banonis followed up on the Section 219 Corp of Engineer funding and the meeting agendas are now attached to the meeting calendar notices.

Mr. Bigley gave an update on what has been learned about the release issued by Reclamation.

Mr. Peifer said that the Waterboard issued a press release indicating it may be taking actions soon on the dry year conditions. RWA is working with the Water Forum to issue a press release later today on the dry year conditions.

Ms. Buckman said that there is not enough water in the upstream reservoirs to meet basic demands plus delta requirements which makes the situation difficult.

5. Federal Legislative Review

- a) Update on federal issues of interest to the committee
- b) Review Federal Legislative Tracker; consider priority bills, committee recommendations
- c) Federal outreach recommendations

Mr. Sapirstein gave an update on appointments, earmark requests and policy. The House Appropriations Committee has deadlines the end of April providing member offices the chance to delay their submissions to the committee by several weeks. The President's preliminary budget will be released in a couple of days with a more defined budget expected May 3rd. Tomorrow the Senate will mark up a wastewater Infrastructure bill in the Environment and Public Works Committee. A more robust Water Infrastructure bill will be pushed out in May putting it on to the House floor sometime in June. There is a concerted effort to create a long-term program of assistance similar to the low-income housing or heating and energy assistance as part of the infrastructure bill.

Chair Sanger said that there is internal work to be done on earmark requests. She said that the bills currently listed on the legislative tracker are the ones to keep an eye on. Letters of support may be written as positions are taken on bills in future meetings. A letter of support has been written for HR 1050.

There was discussion on the process to start prioritizing bills listed on the legislative tracker, the format to be used and when to take actions on the bills.

Mr. Peifer recommended a homework assignment for Chair Sanger, Mr. Bigley, Mr. Ojakian, Mr. Firenzi, Ms. Banonis and himself to establish a process and approach to bring bills forward for consideration by the Federal Affairs Committee. He said that letters were sent out to members of Congress with the federal affairs platform included. The letters were meant to communicate with Congress and their staff about the RWA and the region's priorities with respect to water. Mr. Swartz is prioritizing the list of projects that will be forwarded to RWA member agencies to confirm all projects are included in the list.

Ms. More said that the bills on the legislative tracker are currently organized with watch and track categories. She said that changes could easily be made as requested by the committee.

Chair Sanger appointed Mr. Peifer, Mr. Firenzi, Mr. Bigley, Mr. Zlotnick, Mr. Ojakian and Ms. Banonis to join her as a team for members of congress and staff meetings.

6. WRDA Section 219 Work Group Status

Ms. Banonis gave an update on the Section 219 work group. There is a strategy to limit the number of submitted projects. The work group will concentrate on finalizing the list of projects for the region. The work group will include Ms. More, Chair Sanger, Mr. Zlotnick, Mr. Sapirstein, Ms. Banonis, Mr. Bigley, Mr. Yasutake and Mr. Firenzi.

7. WIIN Act funding for Water Bank status

Ms. Banonis reported on a meeting she attended with Reclamation about funding for the water bank and the next steps to access funding. Reclamation is drafting an MOA for review to get the process started so cost share can be put in place. The MOA will outline the responsibilities of the parties and Reclamation will require a Performance Work Statement (PWS). As things transpire progress will be presented to the committee after review of the MOA.

8. COVID-19 Pandemic and Economic Impacts

- a) Infrastructure list update
- b) Next steps

Staff continues to review and prioritize the projects on the infrastructure list. It has been suggested that the list be forwarded to RWA members requesting feedback and comments and for that information to be presented in updates to the committee. The projects that create jobs will be included in both a stimulus bill and an infrastructure bill. To show the delegation that thought have been given to our needs a list of all projects in the region that could contribute to long term sustainability and water supply reliability should be compiled.

Mr. Peifer summarized saying that the project list will come back to the Federal Affairs Committee with any additional input. The project list will be simplified and sent to the Federal Affairs Committee and then out to member agencies. Any agencies who do not have projects on the list should be contacted. The list will be made to appeal to the various pieces of legislation that have not passed or will be passing bills to increase our funding chances.

9. Action Items

A build process workgroup has been appointed to discuss the process for evaluating legislation.

A Federal Outreach Work Group was appointed.

A summary of the last COVID relief package on water sector provisions will be presented by Mr. Sapirstein and will be sent out to the RWA distribution list.

A section 219 workgroup will coordinate through Ms. Banonis.

The infrastructure list will be shared with the Federal Affairs Committee to start moving that process forward.

Mr. Peifer will reach out to Cathy Lee, Carmichael Water District, to discuss what projects they may have to add to the list.

10. Public Comment

None

11. Next Meeting April 21, 2021

12. Adjournment

Chair Sanger adjourned the meeting at 3:01 p.m.

By:

Chairperson

Attest:
