

Chair Sanger 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
Anne Sanger, Chair, City of Sacramento
Evan Jacobs, California American Water
Cathy Lee, Carmichael Water District
Sean Bigley, City of Roseville
Noelle Mattock, City of Roseville
Brian Sanders, City of Sacramento
Robert Dugan, Placer County Water Agency
Greg Zlotnick, San Juan Water District

Committee Members Not in Attendance:

Tony Firenzi, Placer County Water Agency, Forrest Williams,
Sacramento County Water Agency and Greg Bundesen,
Sacramento Suburban Water District

Others in Attendance:

Ryan Ojakian, Eric Sapirstein, Kristi More, Andy Fecko, Marcus
Yasutake, 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 noted that the Legislative Tracker, Summary of the last COVID Relief Package and the March 23, 2021 Federal Affairs Standing Committee meetings were posted to the RWA website.

Mr. Peifer welcomed David Wheaton, Citrus Heights Water District Public Works Director, who will be participating in the Federal Affairs Committee meetings.

3. Approval of March 23, 2021 Meeting Minutes & Follow up Items from Last Meeting

Minutes from the March 23, 2021 RWA Federal Affairs Standing Committee Meeting

Motion/Second/Carried (M/S/C) Mr. Jacobs moved, with a second by Mr. Bigley, to approve the March 23, 2021 RWA Federal Affairs Standing Committee meetings. Mr. Dugan abstained. The motion carried by the unanimous voice vote of the remaining committee members present.

Chair Sanger reported on action items from the March meeting including the summary that Mr. Sapirstein provided on the last COVID relief bill, Mr. Peifer was to connect with Ms. Lee, Carmichael Water District on important infrastructure projects and Ms. Banonis and Ms. More put together Corps of Engineers Section 219 projects. Chair Sanger is working on scheduling the federal outreach and has a draft proposal for taking positions on legislation for the committee and will present it at the next meeting. A notification needs to go out to the Board on the Infrastructure Project List.

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.

Mr. Dugan reported that he and Jeff Harris have been recognized by the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) with a Statewide award for Regional Cooperation and Advocacy. This award is for work that has been done collectively as a regional partnership trying to increase the visibility of leadership and cooperation as a region.

Mr. Peifer reported on work with the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) saying they are interested in taking the initial steps for some advocacy. There remains work to be done and he has shared our Policy Priorities with them. SACOG is discovering that water sewer and drainage infrastructure lack in many areas and are looking for opportunities for funding.

Mr. Jacobs said that the Governor will be issuing an Executive Order on the drought this afternoon including declaring emergencies in Sonoma and Mendocino Counties and preparedness in other parts of the state.

Mr. Bigley thanked everyone involved in the activity related to the desire to get projects assembled that could be implemented quickly on the state side for potential funding opportunities. The Federal Affairs Committee has put a lot of work into the infrastructure project list.

Chair Sanger said that a remote National Water Resources Association Federal Issues conference is coming up. The conference will be four days over a two-week period. She mentioned the ACWA Conference that begins May 12th.

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 the effort to pass water infrastructure. By the end of the week a bill should be approved that is limited to water infrastructure for clean water, safe drinking water systems and sewer overflows. We are moving forward on infrastructure even though there is not consensus between the Democrats, Republicans and White House.

Chair Sanger said that the infrastructure package pertaining to water could be split up in two bills, one is the traditional gray infrastructure with bridges and roads and the other more human infrastructure.

Ms. Buckman said that typically the habitat pieces that have been funded by Congress in the past are in the \$750 million range. Until we have some NGO's support it is unlikely to get this through Congress.

Ms. More gave an update on the status of the Legislative Tracker. She said there might be a move to do a broad support letter to help push for funding for the new ASO Reclamation program. The program is important with the current drought and continued repair of the watershed from fires. She will keep the committee updated.

Ms. More said that any pending legislation does not get a bill number until it is officially introduced. The Federal Affairs Committee will continue to make recommendations according to how the committee wants and be consistent with the RWA policies and positions. There are 26 bills on the Legislative Tracker for consideration that will be categorized for easy tracking with notes to indicate when letters of support have been sent. From a Reclamation perspective there is a process that is in play looking at how to address Reclamation Infrastructure in a budget reconciliation process.

Mr. Sapirstein gave an update on the STREAM Act and what it might mean for RWA interests like the groundwater bank. There are hurdles for the grant funding and the qualifying process.

Chair Sanger suggested a subgroup of the committee set up meetings with our Congressional offices to make sure they understand our priorities for the region as they pertain to water.

6. WRDA Section 219 Work Group Status

Ms. More gave a status update on the list of projects for submission under Section 219 authority that she worked on. The list is larger than originally anticipated and what is reasonable to expect out of the community funded project process. Congressman Bera has indicated he would rather look at the full list to understand what the needs are and then work to identify what would be submitted. Requesting agency eligibility requirements are being verified. She explained the project limit per member which means that members need to decide which 10 projects to prioritize for the appropriation bills. She explained the advantage of submitting a single large request that covers multiple projects.

Ms. More suggested letters of support be sent from the requesting agencies and other agencies involved in the request.

7. WIIN Act funding for Water Bank Status

Ms. Banonis provided status on the water bank funding. Staff has continued to coordinate with Reclamation on the release of WIIN Act funding. A draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is being reviewed by staff and legal counsel. The MOA is specific to cost sharing on the water bank which includes completing a feasibility study and compliance. Staff is working on the review and development of a scope of work with Reclamation outlining more specifics around project management and technical review activities that will need to be performed in coordination with the Bureau.

8. COVID-19 Pandemic and Economic Impacts

- a) Infrastructure list update
- b) Next steps

Mr. Peifer gave an update on the project list assembled by staff to put people back to work. The list was useful in educating our Congressional delegation on the types of projects and items that could be helpful for a pandemic relief bill. There are projects that are of a broader nature than just the Regional Water Reliability projects although the list contains a lot of those projects. The project list will be used for federal advocacy. It will depend on the type of legislation or funding program that gets proposed or where these projects will be a good fit.

The next step is to present the project list to the RWA Board members for discussion. Mr. Peifer will send a communication to the RWA board informing them of what has been done with the project list and how the projects are prioritized.

Chair Sanger said that the state request was largely for drought resiliency projects that would address climate change. The federal request was for

economic recovery and job creation. The project list will be reviewed to determine the various opportunities.

9. Action Items

Chair Sanger outlined action items including carrying forward the process for supporting federal legislation with letters of support for clarification on how we are going to engage. The project list will be presented to the RWA Board members for discussion. Federal Outreach meetings will be scheduled in May. Ms. More and Ms. Banonis will have status updates on their various efforts at the next Federal Affairs meeting.

Ms. More said that she is working on a draft program guide that includes all available funding for the different projects staff is working on. She will present the guide to the committee at the May meeting.

10. Public Comment

None

11. Next Meeting March 17, 2021

The next Federal Affairs Standing Committee meeting is scheduled for May 19, 2021 beginning at 11:00 a.m.

12. Adjournment

Chair Sanger adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

By:

Chairperson

Attest:
