

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
Tony Firenzi, Vice Chair, Placer County Water Agency
Evan Jacobs, California American Water
Cathy Lee, Carmichael Water District
Noelle Mattock, City of Roseville
Brian Sanders, City of Sacramento
Robert Dugan, Placer County Water Agency

Committee Members Not in Attendance:

Sean Bigley, City of Roseville, Forrest Williams, Sacramento County Water Agency, Greg Bundesen, Sacramento Suburban Water District and Greg Zlotnick

Others in Attendance:

Ryan Ojakian, Eric Sapirstein, Kristi More, Michelle Banonis, David Wheaton, Jessica Law, William Roberts, Grace Espindola, Ross Branch, Lane Dickson, Kevin Greene, Andy Fecko, Jim Peifer 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 welcomed Grace Espindola who will be joining the Federal Affairs committee as a new voting member. She also welcomed Lane Dickson with the Ferguson Group and Kevin Greene from the Sacramento Metro Chamber. Mr. Greene is a consultant to the Chamber for the 2021 Cap to Cap trip.

3. Approval of previous meeting minutes

Minutes from the May 19, 2021 RWA Federal Affairs Standing Committee Meeting

Motion/Second/Carried (M/S/C) Mr. Firenzi moved, with a second by Mr. Sanders, to approve the May 19, 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 said that the RWA Executive Director will send out an email to the RWA membership regarding the American Rescue Plan that is available for water and wastewater sectors. Outreach meetings with a core group of the Federal Affairs Committee are being scheduled with DC offices.

Mr. Peifer gave an update on the American Rescue Plan saying that there have been meetings clarifying the requirements and explaining what the funding is and what it can be used for. This information will be included in correspondence to the RWA membership. RWA would like to help organize a response to make sure that at least a portion of the funding would be considered for water and sewer infrastructure. RWA also wants to organize an effort to educate elected officials with our broader water community for the need to fund water infrastructure. Michelle Banonis will be working on the communication language.

Mr. Peifer said that the 2021 Cap to Cap conference in October will be held virtually with an in-person conference expected spring of 2022. There will be a request for volunteers for a water team to work behind the scenes and prepare papers that will be needed. The Federal Affairs Committee could convene that effort and strengthen our voice.

There was discussion that RWA has been the collective voice of our region for water issues and leads the dialog for federal engagement. It was suggested that if anyone new to RWA or the Federal Affairs Committee would like to know the history of RWA and how they have interacted with the Sacramento Metro Chamber and other agencies to educate on water issues to please contact one of the committee members.

5. Federal Legislative Review

- a) Update on federal issues of interest to the committee
 - a. Treasury guidance on local government assistance
 - b. Long term ratepayer assistance
 - c. Western water infrastructure
 - d. FY 2022 Appropriations request for Sacramento area account
 - e. Water resources funding opportunities guide
- b) Review Federal Legislative Tracker; consider priority bills
- c) Federal outreach recommendations

Mr. Sapirstein gave an update on the American Rescue Plan funding. The Treasury Department issued guidance on how the funding will be distributed to agencies, local counties, cities, states and local government. There is money that will go to the states to support water infrastructure, water, wastewater and broadband.

Chair Sanger said there will be more information forthcoming that will clarify the details.

Ms. Banonis noted that there is no cost share requirement for determining eligibility. There is a list of questions that Congress has developed for clarification and guidance for potential recipients to define eligible projects. It may be helpful for RWA to put together a letter in response to the eligibility questions providing clarification.

Mr. Sapirstein said that the Health and Human Services is in the process of moving forward on getting the \$1.1 billion in the rate payer assistance for water and wastewater utility arrearages. The Energy and Commerce committee took action on a bill that would provide long term drinking water and wastewater assistance. The bill provides assistance to low-income households to pay for their water services. There is also a bill that deals with groundwater contamination without regard to where it came from. He gave an update on the Western Water Initiative saying that RWA support is requested based on the fact that the groundwater bank has been identified as one of the grandfathered projects for funding assistance.

Ms. More gave an update on the Section 219 working group saying that we are hopeful to add additional funding for the Sacramento area above what was previously prioritized. We are trying to get the regional chunk of funding instead of having to deal with the individual projects as required by the house. This account is under the Corps of Engineers and they need congressional authority to move forward on projects. A full list of projects has been submitted to the Corp. A Congressional letter was received on the Western Water infrastructure where a few house members did push for reclamation funding to be included in the infrastructure package. There is an effort and developing ideas working towards funding of drought relief through

Reclamation and what types of projects would receive funding. The Sacramento Area Account is an authority through the Corps of Engineers to perform or construct water resiliency, water conservation and water reliability projects in Sacramento County, Placer County and El Dorado County.

Mr. Zlotnick said that there is a large group who is pushing to make sure something is included for infrastructure regardless of the process or timing the package takes. The request is for \$14 billion for Reclamation programs to be included in addition to the \$30 billion for forest restoration.

Mr. Dugan commented that letters have been written to Congress on the Buy American Mandate asking that they repeal exemptions on construction and construction related materials for infrastructure. Our water systems are dependent on imported manufactured products. We need to ask our federal lobbyist to focus on this because if we receive infrastructure dollars we need to be able to get the materials to build or maintain our systems.

After discussion it was suggested that an ad hoc committee be appointed to review the price of water issue. Reclamation should be allowed to purchase water, including groundwater, at the going price and be able to utilize that water whatever the market price. Chair Sanger will participate in this ad hoc committee with Michelle Banonis, Tony Firenzi, and Sean Bigley.

Ms. More said that there are target dates for meetings with Congressional delegates and staff offices. She requested a short list of priorities to present at meetings. The legislative tracker only includes legislation that has been introduced officially. Letters of support will be noted on the legislative tracker as they are sent.

6. WIIN Act Funding for Water Bank Status

Ms. Banonis said that we continue communications with Reclamation. To offset costs we have the ability to pull some additional expenses for in kind services that we have expended in the past on the water bank. The agreement is currently being reviewed by legal.

7. Action Items

Mr. Greene said that he will be the policy consultant working with the teams and working through policy papers on the preferred appointments to target. In his previous position as Director of Government Affairs for the Chamber he is familiar with this work.

Chair Sanger said that a core group will work on comments on the American Rescue Plan through a letter on how that funding can be used.

The Federal Affairs Committee will engage with Senator Feinstein's office on the Stream Act thanking her for listing the water bank and draft bill and looking for any provisions that may be problematic.

A short-term ad hoc committee will meet to discuss the drought, Reclamation, and preparation of two position papers for Cap-to-Cap. The ad hoc committee members include Chair Sanger, Tony Firenzi, Evan Jacobs, Robert Dugan and Kristi More.

A report will be added to the next meeting agenda on scheduling late June meetings with our delegates.

8. Public Comment

None.

9. Next Meeting July 21, 2021

10. Adjournment

Chair Sanger adjourned the meeting at 12:20 p.m.

By:

Chairperson

Attest:
