

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
Sean Bigley, City of Roseville
Noelle Mattock, City of Roseville
Greg Zlotnick, San Juan Water District

Committee Members Not in Attendance:

Brian Sanders, City of Sacramento, Robert Dugan, 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, Michelle Banonis, David Wheaton, David French, 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.

Mr. Peifer reported that a letter was sent supporting the nomination of Tanya Trujillo to serve as Assistant Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior for Water and Science.

Vice Chair Firenzi said that he was invited by Congressman McClintock to participate in congressional testimony on Western Drought chaired by Representative Bentz. His testimony focused on Northern California, the American River, impact of the drought and our infrastructure needs.

3. Approval of previous meeting minutes

Minutes from the April 21, 2021 RWA Federal Affairs Standing Committee Meeting

Motion/Second/Carried (M/S/C) Mr. Bigley moved, with a second by Ms. Lee, to approve the April 21, 2021 RWA Federal Affairs Standing Committee meetings. Mr. Jacobs was not in attendance for this agenda item. The motion carried by the unanimous voice vote of the committee members present.

4. Disclosures and Regional Coordination

Vice 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 reminded the committee that RWA passed a resolution responding to the dry year conditions.

Mr. Sapirstein said that he gave Mr. Peifer's name to the delegation as a contact for further information.

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 treasury releasing funds to state, local cities and counties as part of the last round of COVID relief funding. The funds may also be used for water, wastewater and infrastructure needs. How the funds are used is up to the individual cities. Agencies are required to define projects and apply for funding through their city of state.

Ms. More clarified that special districts are required to access funding for projects through the state, city or county. Special districts cannot be a direct recipient, but they have access to utilize the funds. They are not prohibited from receiving funds they just do not receive them directly. A webinar is scheduled tomorrow that will explain how to access funds for special districts.

She recommended sending comments to the Treasury to help facilitate the way resources are made available.

There was discussion on the different ways to access available funding. It was suggested that the Executive Director send an informational letter to the RWA membership to educate them on making determinations on how to utilize the funding.

Ms. Mattock provided a link to a coalition letter and urged RWA to sign on to the letter to assist special districts in obtaining funding.

Mr. Sapirstein gave an update on the development of implementation of \$1.1 billion that is in the Treasury to provide to ratepayer assistance, including special districts. The Assistance, Quality and Affordability Act, HR 3291 and the Low-Income Water Customer Assistance Program, HR 3293 are part of an infrastructure package.

There was discussion on the “Buy America” provision and the cost impact to agencies on future projects.

Ms. More gave some background on the Western Water Infrastructure proposal that will be part of the infrastructure package.

Mr. French said that as the discussion on water infrastructure and forest management takes place, we need to make sure local water agencies are included. There is an Ad Hoc group that includes ACWA and WRI Salt River Project that sent out a letter to the Agriculture House and Senate committees urging support for water infrastructure, forest health management and energy. RWA is interested in having individual agencies and RWA members sign on to the letter.

Ms. More will update the legislative tracker for the next meeting. Chair Sanger will have the updated version posted on the RWA website.

Chair Sanger is sending out possible blocks of time to schedule 20-minute video call meetings with some of our DC representatives and their staff. In the interest of time, it was suggested that talking points and any tech issues be worked out prior to the members and staff joining the call. Dry Year items should be included in the talking points.

6. WIIN Act Funding for Water Bank Status

Ms. Banonis gave an update on WIIN Act funding for the water bank activities. They are continuing to work with Reclamation for cost share on the water bank using WIIN Act funds and in-kind services for work that has already been done.

7. Action Items

Mr. Peifer will send out the water resources funding guide to the RWA membership that the Ferguson Group prepared. He will also send out the coalition letter with information that special districts could utilize and information for RWA members to raise awareness of the available funding.

The American Rescue Plan funding has been dispatched for this month. It would be timely for anyone who would like to engage their city or county on the issue.

Chair Sanger suggested reviewing bills for support including HR 2979 to amend the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 and the Forest Management issue with a report back to the Federal Affairs committee next month.

8. Public Comment

None.

9. Next Meeting June 16, 2021

10. Adjournment

Chair Sanger adjourned the meeting at 12:11 p.m.

By:

Chairperson

Attest:
